



# PAUL GREEN'S WORDBOOK

An Alphabet of Reminiscence

*Paul Green*

*Paul Green's Wordbook  
An Alphabet of Reminiscence  
in two volumes  
is presented to*

*in recognition of generous support  
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# Paul Green's Wordbook

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An Alphabet of Reminiscence

by  
PAUL GREEN



Edited by Rhoda H. Wynn  
Foreword by John Ehle

Volume I • A - K

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## In Memoriam

Paul Green was born in Lillington, North Carolina, on March 17, 1894, and died in Chapel Hill on May 4, 1981. In 1921 he took a B.A. from the University of North Carolina and the following year married Elizabeth Atkinson Lay. Their long and rich life together in Chapel Hill ended only with his death.

Green came into national prominence with *In Abraham's Bosom*, for which he received the Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1927. A decade later he launched a new form of theater with *The Lost Colony*, a symphonic drama that now has run for more than fifty years and inspired a movement. In addition to his writing, which includes fiction and motion pictures as well as plays, Green also attacked some of our severest social problems as a crusader for social justice. Always a champion of the down and out, he worked — frequently in a hostile environment — to secure equal rights for blacks and other minorities, and equal opportunities in education and employment. A strong faith in human potential also led him to campaign against capital punishment. And a lifelong passion for peace drove him during his final decades to seek disarmament, an end to the Cold War, and friendly relations between East and West.

Uniting the strands of Green's life was the outlook of a humanist, a preoccupation with the need for individual expression. Among the purest forms of such expression were the sayings and doings of people close to nature — farmers, fishermen, mountain folk. Green looked on the folk tradition as the common heritage of mankind, and his *Wordbook* suggests the portion of the heritage alive in him.

Laurence G. Avery  
Professor, Department of English  
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
and President, The Paul Green Foundation



Lance Richardson, photographer

**PAUL GREEN**

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## Foreword

Paul Green, the powerful, distinctly American author, was staggeringly big in mind and spirit. His intelligence was beyond measuring and his spirit was all-embracing. He was willing to include every single man, woman and child, even the lowliest, even the bigoted, even the condemned on death row in Raleigh; for the soon-to-die he would hold overnight vigils, for the others he hired attorneys, using his own funds, seeking help from friends. I once referred to his guest room as the one hundred dollar room and, on my saying that, his eyes showed his hurt. Of course, I felt miserable, joking about one of his causes.

I have come to think of this book as being his intellectual autobiography. It does not tell the story of his life in any year by year fashion; he was too modest ever to do that. Rather it picks and chooses, is playful, creates word games, goes chasing after memories, tells stories, sings songs. His kind eyes are on us as we read. He wonders if we understand. "Please try to become a friend of mine and pardon my meandering. Let this linger in your mind. Settle here beside me. Criticize my book, if you like. Law, I do! Hold it to your own light. Let these pages be a companion, a friend."

"I was too hard on the preachers in this manuscript," he told me not long before he agreed to die—it took him eighty-seven years to reach that decision. "I have to change some of that," he told me.

Well, they were hard on him, too. They had trampled him when he was a boy. They had scared him to hell and back. He wrote a stage play about that, incidentally: *Tread the Green Grass*. It is experimental, difficult to do successfully. I saw it performed successfully in Memorial Hall in Chapel Hill in 1969. I thought it was beautiful and moving.

*The Wordbook* will need shortening," Elizabeth, his wife, told him. "No need to put so many verses of hymns in it. There are other books where the hymns can be found."



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"I'll see what the editors say about that," Paul told her. They were sitting in the library of their big home in the country near Chapel Hill. A fire was burning in the fireplace; he was one for hearth fires. And for her, his wife of fifty-nine years.

He mentioned this book again while in the hospital with yet another meeting with the "Old Man himself," as he called death. (He once said to me, referring to a previous hospital experience, "I saw the Old Man himself, John, and, you know, I was not the least bit afraid.") I had ventured up to his room where several signs on the door read "DO NOT ENTER," but I pushed the door open anyway, and there he lay, father figure of all who knew him, aged, slender, on his back, stickers attached to his bare chest and shoulders, gadgets reading his pulse. One of his daughters was sitting beside the bed. "Come on in here," he said. We talked for a short while, and soon he went to the subject close to him, as dear as life itself, this book which he had written over the years. He wouldn't estimate how many years. *Decades. The Wordbook.* He had put down everything he had known, "about everything I've learned."

"What sort of order is it in?" I asked.

"Alphabetical. Do you mean what shape? It is finished. The last bit of it is with the typist. She is doing the final pages. It's a long book, John."

"How long?"

"Sixteen hundred pages."

I laughed out of surprise.

"Single spaced," he added.

"I want to see it," I told him, "I want to see that book!"

"Elizabeth says it needs cutting."

"I want to see it as it is."

"Will you get it published for me?"

"I will. I certainly will."

"It might need cutting."

"Let everybody cut it for himself," I said. So I believed then, and do now.

My wife Rosemary and I sat with him in his library on the afternoon of the day before he died. He had the hiccups; he simply could not stop hiccupping, but no little thing like that was going to ruin our visit. There was the book. That wordbook. It was what he was leaving behind. It had been a feature year by year of his life's work.

The writer of so many dozen stories and plays, the father of outdoor drama in America, the wise teacher, the friend, was leaving this gift.

Himself in this gift.

In your hands.

One of seven children, Paul was born March 17, 1894, *about one hundred years ago*, in a farm family in an eastern, sandy county of North Carolina. In

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later life, on one occasion he complained to me about the flatness of his homeland, “while your novels have those great mountains, towering over the people, embracing your actions all around.”

His mother named him after St. Paul. She was an interesting, brilliant lady, with charm and musical talent who, when Paul was thirteen, collapsed. Paul was getting ready for bed at the time, and with one shoe on and one off, he ran for help. There was no one who could help quite enough, it seems, and she died.

He claimed to have read books while he plowed. He was honest in most all matters, so we will need to accommodate even that. He ordered a mail-order violin and registered for a correspondence course, practiced in the woods, making frightful noises one suspects until, lo and behold, he played.

He pitched for a baseball team, served as principal of a school, saved his money, and by age 22 had as much as he guessed he would ever get this way. He borrowed \$5.00 to buy a yellow suit, got a free ride to Chapel Hill and registered in college.

That was 1916. At Chapel Hill he began to write plays, and Paul had the wonder of seeing his own play produced, the third play he had ever read, and the first he had ever seen. This was the beginning of a tumultuous career, with Broadway, Hollywood and outdoor theater supplying praise and brickbats galore.

In 1917 he enlisted for military service, fought in the trenches in France and was commissioned on the battlefield. He told me when one of his soldiers refused to return to the trenches and advance as ordered, he leveled his pistol at him and said he would kill him if he did not. Paul later wondered how he had ever come to threaten a friend’s life, and he took it as good reason to be forgiving of individuals who fail.

About ten years after returning to Chapel Hill, by then a teacher of philosophy and active in the Carolina Playmakers, Paul had his first New York City production. The play was *In Abraham’s Bosom*, and its protagonist was a black Southerner with ambition, who was not allowed to realize his goal. Paul received the Pulitzer Prize. Later, the Broadway production of *Roll Sweet Chariot* fell apart like a bag full of marbles its opening night. The huge cast was left in disarray, the audience in confusion. Next night, it all went better, and so it gained each night after; however, the Shuberts wanted their theater and closed the play.

*The House of Connelly* was produced successfully by the new Group Theatre. *The Field God*.

*Johnny Johnson*, using Kurt Weill’s music, a beautiful musical well ahead of its time and received without proper criticism in the press. John Gassner of Yale Drama School in his theater history said it might have been the turning point of the American stage. *Native Son*, collaborating with Richard Wright. Orson Welles directed, and became exasperated with Paul, who had more than a few criticisms of the directing. “Well, here comes our Southern playwright again.” He finally refused to let Paul come near.

In Hollywood, Paul wrote films for George Arliss and Will Rogers, among

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them the first version of *State Fair*. He was a personal friend of Will Rogers, but one of his memories of him was hateful to contemplate. The two of them were walking together, and a little boy asked Will if he would sign his autograph book.

"Why yes, little boy. What's your name?"

The boy stammered it out.

"To my friend, Billy Medlin, from his friend, Will Rogers," Will murmured as he wrote. He closed the book, handed it to the boy and went on his way.

Tagging along, Paul glanced back only once at the boy who was looking through his book for the treasured page. Paul had noticed that Will had written nothing in the book at all.

"I know you think I'm terrible," Will told him. "But they worry you to death."

Many writers as famous as Paul were in Hollywood in the thirties, including Bill Faulkner, who was also a friend. Faulkner drank a bit too much in those days. During prohibition, on one trip they made together, Bill wanted Paul to drive his new Cadillac up a narrow dirt road to a drop-off for whiskey, and once he had his full, quart mason jar, he was ready to face the open road.

Bette Davis used to say her favorite line of all her movies was one Paul wrote for her: "I'd like to kiss you, but I just washed my hair."

Paul, Bill Faulkner and most all the writers were out there re-doing each other's work, turning out scripts for stars, and for producers whom virtually nobody respected as artists or public servants. Disgusted, Paul would leave, but would be called back—"they want me to re-do other people's scripts," he complained, "want me as a critic, advisor, editor. Not much writing on my own. And you'd be surprised what they'd throw at me to try to keep me out there. Money, beautiful women..."

About Paul, Katherine Anne Porter wrote at the time, "The honest, tender and gifted soul stood out like a stalk of good sugar cane in the thicket of poison ivy."

Paul also was teaching playwriting during this period of his life, and Carolina Playmaker Sam Selden told me Paul was unpredictable. A great teacher, he might find too little talent among his students to compel him to help them, or he would get a call from Hollywood or New York and be off, not even turning in reports on attendance, much less notes on student performance, or grades. Days later he would be found at work engrossed, in Hollywood or somewhere else. One-act plays, full-length plays, screenplays, many short stories. Yes, and novels. *The Laughing Pioneer* was written in 1932 on the train taking him to California. Paul sent the manuscript to a publisher. On hearing not one word for weeks, he bothered to ask about its whereabouts, fearing rejection. The novel was at the printer's being set in type, he was told.

He rewrote the galleys, had the book reset.

His second novel, *This Body the Earth*, is a major work set in the day of heavy poverty in the South. It appeared in 1935.

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One time a group of civic leaders caught Paul at home in Chapel Hill. They asked if he would visit Roanoke Island, the very spot where the first English colonists to America landed. This was before Jamestown and Plymouth Rock. Could something be done one summer as a commemoration. Paul caught fire over the idea, saw visions in music and words and moving figures, heard echoes off sand shores and the ocean, bathed himself in details of the events, recreating the “Royals” and “commoners,” and wrote a new type of drama, which he named “symphonic drama.” In an outdoor theater, using a central stage and two side stages, using dancers, music, a narrator, a cast of over a hundred, he wove a story of empire dreamers, home dreamers, Indians and the parents of Virginia Dare, the first English child born in the New World, and finally the disappearance of all the colonists into the vast wilderness.

*Now down the trackless hollow years  
That swallowed them but not their song  
We send response—  
“O lusty singer, dreamer, pioneer,  
Lord of the wilderness, the unafraid,  
Tamer of darkness, fire and flood,  
Of the soaring spirit winged aloft  
On the plumes of agony and death—  
Hear us, O hear!  
The dream still lives,  
It lives, it lives,  
And shall not die!”*

Paul gave the play to the civic leaders to produce, and they did, using local people, the Carolina Playmakers helping—and it was a great success. It played that first summer, 1937, and the next, and has since, to this date.

Paul wrote fifteen other outdoor dramas.

Rhoda Wynn, his assistant for years, indeed up to the day of his death, tells us that Paul once registered himself at the hospital as a humanist. That was his religion he told the clerk. “We don’t have a code number for that, Mr. Green. Would you think of something else?” the clerk said. Humanist was an appropriate description of him. He was dedicated to humanity, and to the best of man’s art and thought. He worked for equal treatment of all people, under the law. Once he compared the university at which he worked, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, to a lighthouse casting its light afar, but dark at its own base.

When Richard Wright, the black novelist, visited him in Chapel Hill, Paul’s treating Wright as a guest and equal broke social codes of the South in that day. Paul was accosted for doing so by angry men, but he offered no excuse, and even shielded Mr. Wright from knowing of this embarrassment because it might hurt his feelings. Paul did not come to despise the intolerant, the men who had hounded

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him. He was never intolerant of the intolerant; he was sympathetic to the plight of all people.

He believed violence in plays would lead to greater violence. Excessive violence on television and world news troubled him.

He opposed the arrogance in patriotism, but loved the country which was his to care for.

He was wary of the jury system, saw it as authorizing twelve poorly educated people to make decisions. He would rather trust a judge, he said.

He was never mean, his daughter Janet tells me, simply never, nor petty. His niece Claire has one criticism of him, and this has to do with Saturday afternoons when he took the children to the movies. Uncle Paul never, simply never, let them see the whole thing. Up and out, let's go children. Claire says he was exasperating when attending plays. In New York, he would go to a play, leave at the end of an act, duck into another. She says the only one in her experience he sat through was *My Fair Lady*.

I knew him to sit through one other, *Winterset*, at the Playmakers Theater, his wife beside him. I was on the other side. It's true he was all over the seat, his long body coiling and uncoiling with tension, revealing excitement, irritation, distress. He was attuned to every emotion depicted. In the love scene, the director allowed the male actor to touch, indeed to cup during his embrace one of the lady's breasts, and Paul was instantly airborne.

His daughter Janet pays tribute to his teaching ability, which was every day exercised; she came upon him one evening during his gardening time, a daily two-hour ritual, and found he had heaved brush into a mountain. "They built great piles like this in Homer's time," he told her, "on all the headlands of the sea to bring the news to Greece—fire by fire—that Troy had fallen." He went on piling brush, Janet says.

In my own experience, Paul was the great teacher. Always I took manuscripts to him to criticize. Never did he embarrass or chide. Always he featured in our discussion what could be praised. He asked questions about the other parts, hoping, I believe, that I would find a better way. He never delayed my work, not at all. "John, can you get the manuscript to me today? Can you come over tomorrow evening after dinner, so we can talk about it?"

I know of only one writer he ever lied to. This was Professor Horace Williams, Chairman of the Philosophy Department when Paul was a young faculty member. Professor Williams was acknowledged to be an excellent teacher and wretched writer. He had written another book, one lost in the author's efforts and trials. After going through the manuscript, Paul told me he tried to avoid the proud arrogant professor. However, on his way along Franklin Street one day, Williams hailed him and came alongside. "Paul, did you read my book?"

"Yes, Professor, I did," Paul said, bracing himself.

"What do you think of it?"

Paul decided the need to support his family must be considered, that and

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the feelings of the elderly man. "I tell you, Professor, I dreamed last night my house caught fire, and I leaped out of bed wondering if I should save your manuscript or my baby."

Williams was impressed. He accepted the compliment. A ways along the gravel sidewalk he said, "Which did you?"

Too late to turn back, Paul said, "I saved your book, Professor."

A ways farther on, Professor Williams stopped and for a while gazed at the horizon. "Paul, you've always done right."

John Ehle  
Penland, North Carolina

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## Editor's Preface

In Paul Green's plays, radio dramas and motion pictures—and in his novels and short stories as well—the speech, customs, work and play activities of the characters were significant. Even before he realized he would devote his professional life to writing, Green had developed a keen ear for the spoken word and the music of the people and an interest in their folklore. Recollections of his childhood and youth always included stories, songs and traditions he had found in family and community activities and extended to remembrances of folk sayings and beliefs he heard while chopping cotton with the fieldhands, white and black, on his father's farm in North Carolina's Harnett County, working in summer lumber camps, and serving in the army in World War I.

This *Wordbook* is the culmination of more than sixty years of his observing and collecting those words, superstitions, customs, cures, riddles, games, stories, songs and beliefs, wherever he encountered them. It is a personal collection, posthumously published unabridged. While the entries are not of a bounded geographical area, Green's roots were in eastern North Carolina, which is traversed by the Cape Fear River. References to "Cape Fear" and "the Valley" relate to that area, which encompasses his Harnett County birthplace and Chapel Hill, which, regardless of his wide-ranging United States and foreign travel, was "home" from his 1916 freshman enrollment at the University of North Carolina until his death in 1981.

Paul Green's college education was directed first toward philosophy in which he majored at U.N.C., with Dr. Horace Williams as his mentor. Later Green taught courses on philosophical concepts and comparative religion, references to which one finds also in the *Wordbook*. Undoubtedly, his interest in folklore was increased by association with faculty colleague and folklorist Dr. Howard Odum and with playwriting teacher Frederick H. Koch, affectionately called "Proff," who encouraged his students to write plays, "folk plays," from what they knew. The



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characters and places Green originally dramatized were, therefore, of the Valley.

The earliest record of this wordbook collection is a bound volume of 427 typewritten pages, entitled, *Folk Beliefs and Practices in Central and Eastern North Carolina 1926-28*, co-authored by Elizabeth Lay Green and Paul Green, which was catalogued in the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library, in March 1937. The volume includes a list of "Informants," as diverse as Mr. Green's sisters, a "Mrs. Stubblefield (Beauty Parlor), Raleigh," and Mr. W.S. Turner, Dean, Shaw University, Raleigh, as well as the Border Books Club of Spray, North Carolina, and *The Progressive Farmer*, Editorial Department, Raleigh. A three-page bibliography cites a range of sources, including seven almanacs, the *Holy Bible* (King James Version), seven volumes of *County Folk-Lore of Gloucestershire, Suffolk, Geicestershire and Rutland*, London, 1895; *Folklore of Shakespeare*, T.F.T. Dyer, New York, 1884; *A Book of New England Legends and Folk Lore*, Samuel Adams Drake, Boston, 1884; and the Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 1912. One must presume that Mr. and Mrs. Green selected from the reference books only entries they might find in central and eastern North Carolina, in accordance with the title, but even in that first collection the entries were not credited to specific sources or identified by the contributor's urban or rural residency, race, profession or gender. The manuscript consists of eleven main headings: Folk Beliefs and Practices Concerning Birth and Childhood, Childhood Beliefs and Practices, Love and Marriage, Death, Man's Work, Recreation and Entertainment, Man's Health, Religion, General Superstitions and Credences, Native Wisdom, and Imaginative Beliefs and Sayings. Each heading has numerous subsections. A note on the title page, "First draft of notes from which book is to be written," a two-page allowance for a "Prefatory Note" and ten pages for an "Introduction, Giving Historical Background and Picture of Present Day" indicate the Greens' plans.

By all records, however, the 1926-28 "Folk Beliefs and Practices" manuscript was never revised.

Two decades after it was compiled, the manuscript, plus eleven pages of folk sayings Paul Green had recorded from W.P.A. workers, was made available to Dr. Newman Ivey White, Duke University Department of English, who had accepted responsibility for organizing the voluminous folklore materials of the late Frank C. Brown and beginning what was to become the seven-volume *Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore*, Duke University Press, 1952-1964. Responding to an editing inquiry from Dr. White, Paul Green wrote from California, September 1946:

As to the proverbs and folk sayings which Elizabeth and I collected — my memory is a little bit hazy. I know that we traveled around in eastern North Carolina in an old Ford car back in 1927 and '28, and we talked to hundreds of people of all walks and stations of life in that region. We would always raise the subject of "old sayings,"

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stimulating our informants with reference to some well-known ones of our own, etc. We gathered a great many proverbs this way. Then also we searched in our own remembrance for those we had heard. Although my father had died a year or two before this project was underway, I imagine I set down at least a hundred which I had heard him use, such as “wilful waste makes woeful want,” “a fat today makes a hungry tomorrow,” etc. Then also Elizabeth and I went through a great number of proverb collections and thus refreshed our memory as to those we had actually heard or which some of our informants had heard. In addition to this we sent out hundreds and hundreds of questionnaires, which among items of superstitions, health, cures, etc., carried a heading calling for proverbs. I am sure that our methods were quite unscientific, and no doubt through the “consonance” of memory we caught some literary bits in our fishing net. So that is the way it was. And what among those proverbs is good sound folklore and what is contaminated by the subjective imagination I cannot tell at this distance. But I would hazard a guess that about ninety percent of the stuff is authentic — maybe more.

The Greens’ collection was valuable to Dr. White, who acknowledged (letter of April 10, 1945) “extracting and cataloguing ...some 3,000 items from the folklore collection that you and Elizabeth made,” items which he integrated in the appropriate sections. Green contributions are acknowledged in the indices of several volumes, and Dr. Wayland D. Hand notes in Volume I that “the Green Collection appears as a source 1,426 times, an amazing total.”

The years following 1928 were extremely active for Paul Green. He spent two Guggenheim Fellowship years in Europe, wrote ten screenplays in Hollywood, and dramatized the story of *The Lost Colony*, with which he introduced a new genre of American theatre, “symphonic drama.” He followed it with nine more symphonic dramas — *The Common Glory*, *The Founders*, *Faith of Our Fathers*, *The 17th Star*, *Wilderness Road*, *The Confederacy*, *The Stephen Foster Story*, *Cross and Sword* and *Texas*—all by 1966. During this period he also published three books of short stories, five books of essays and two novels; served in numerous national, regional and state leadership positions, including President of the American Folk Festival, 1934-45; and, with his wife Elizabeth, raised a son and three daughters.

Paul Green’s principal achievement was as a creative writer — foremost in drama where the spoken word is basic and the rhythm of the dialogue creates character, lyricism and suspense. It is not surprising that folklore continued for him as a concomitant six-decade interest. At the same time he was recognized as a champion of human rights, especially for the downtrodden, whether white, Negro or Indian. He visited death row inmates at Raleigh’s Central Prison and took a strong position against capital punishment; he supported the educational

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goals of the Lumbee Indians in Robeson County, North Carolina, who were limited by a third school system, separate from both blacks and whites; and for more than half a century he spoke and wrote, decrying the restricted opportunities for the Negro. "His father laid the bricks of the university library building. Why can't the boy borrow a book?" he asked poignantly. Stories and expressions gleaned from all these experiences interested him and were added to his collection.

Sometime in the late 1940s and '50s Green adopted a new format — alphabetical — for his numerous items. He had a selected number of entries from the earlier manuscript typed on 3"x 5" cards and alphabetized. (The researcher, by cross-checking, can identify which of the manuscript entries he did not carry forward and thus determine the pattern of his selection.) In 1967, when I began my work as his assistant, he was again converting those cards, with several hundred he had subsequently added, to "books." Mrs. Jane Suggs, a Chapel Hill homemaker and typist, copied them on double-spaced pages compiled in five looseleaf binders the author called his "wordbook." To Paul Green's frequent visitors and interviewers (indeed, even to the camera of *The Dream Still Lives*, a 1971 biographical program produced by WUNC-TV) he displayed these notebooks and stated his plans to publish them "someday."

For the remaining fourteen years of his life he continued to collect and—it should be noted—to write dramas and short stories. Always he carried 3"x 5" cards in his pocket for the chance encounter with a familiar bit of "folklore," at which he often commented, "Why, I've heard that all my life. I must be sure to put it in my wordbook." Occasionally, too, he would note a modern expression, belief, story or custom because, for the writer, "everything is grist for the mill." Much as one empties his pockets of coins after a trip, Paul Green dropped those cards from his pockets into a box in his office. In odd moments I would check them against the looseleaf pages to determine if they were new entries or if his notations gave a new or additional meaning. And I would enter these by hand in the alphabetical arrangement.

This "wordbook," then, is a record of his observations and "grist" for the mill of Paul Green, a writer who was also a university professor and recognized human rights leader.

Apart from the adoption of items by Dr. Newman Ivey White, only one other volume has been published directly from this manuscript. In 1968 Professor Richard Walser selected 103 entries featuring stories and, with Green's permission, submitted them to the North Carolina Folklore Society, Raleigh. Under the title *Words and Ways*, the Folklore Society published a special issue, Volume XVI, No. 4, December 1968, with copyright by Paul Green.

In the 1980-81 winter, before beginning the writing of two new plays for which research was complete and his treatments sketched out, Mr. Green determined we should review again the looseleaf collection and get "a clean typed copy." Sitting together at a long office table, he and I read aloud every entry, and here and there he amended them. Charlotte Mansfield of Chapel Hill began a new

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typescript while Green turned again to playwriting.

On April 30, 1981, four days before his life and work ended, he wrote in a still strong hand to his longtime friend John M. Ehle, Jr., “Your interest in the wordbook encourages me no end. I wish to proceed with that project, and in any way I can, partake of your interest and guiding suggestions. I know your creative words are popping into being but any time you can take a bit of time to drop me a note or give me a telephone call with suggestions, I’ll appreciate it.”

John Ehle did more. He persevered through numerous publishing contacts to get the wordbook published posthumously without conceding to an abridgement of it.

You, the reader, undoubtedly will find in these pages unfamiliar and new material, regardless of your heritage or experience, because the content represents another time (spanning the nearly nine decades of Paul Green’s life and earlier years from which he drew) and another place perhaps from that in which you grew up. But you’ll find familiar entries, too — more so if you are of Southern lineage — ones you may have heard all your life or a game you played as a child. Your responses will affirm the value of preserving words and expressions which might be lost by assimilation, and serve as an acknowledgment of the universality of some folklore. *Verba volant, scripta manent* — words fly away, writing remains.

For me it was a privilege and a joy to work with Paul Green on this and numerous other projects during his final fourteen years and to continue his work under The Paul Green Foundation, established in 1982.

In the untold hours I have spent on this voluminous manuscript — proofreading, cross-checking entries, correcting alphabetization, cross-referencing stories and preparing the whole for publication — I have been faithful to Green’s manuscript, resisting the inclination to delete an entry, add a definition I have known, or change a Green statement. It is *his* personal lexicon, not a linguistic collection representative of the geographic South or the author’s own language usage. The games are not limited to ones he played; race prejudice and religious fundamentalism certainly were not of his credo; and neither profanity nor obscenities were in the vocabulary of this man of letters.

The Paul Green Foundation, the Appalachian Consortium Press, family and friends are pleased to publish and make available this *Wordbook* in tribute to him, his interest in folklore and his creative use of words.

Rhoda H. Wynn

Executive Director, The Paul Green Foundation

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## Acknowledgments

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Meanwhile the Foundation Publications Committee, with Betsy Green Moyer, chairman, determined that the wordbook manuscript of her late father should be available to students and adults via North Carolina school and municipal libraries as well as through private purchases. With persuasion and repeated proposals, Mrs. Moyer developed grants and individual contributions for publication and distribution. Two grants from the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Durham, North Carolina, matched by The Paul Green Foundation, and a liberal grant from the Lynn R. and Karl E. Prickett Foundation, Greensboro, North Carolina, were supplemented by a generous contribution from Mrs. Paul Green\*. The fund was further increased by donations from the following individuals: Laurence Avery\*, Charles and Betty Cheek, Byrd Green Cornwell\*, W.W. Finlator\*, Erma Green Gold, Janet M. Green\*, Paul E. Green, Jr.\*, W.A. Johnson\*, H.G. Jones\*, Frank Lewin\*, Betsy Green Moyer\*, Sam Ragan\*, Terry

## Paul Green's Wordbook

Sanford\*, Mark R. Sumner\*, Robert E. Ward\*, M. Abbott Van Nostrand\*, and Rhoda H. Wynn\*. (\*Current or past Paul Green Foundation Trustee.)

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Typists Jane Suggs in 1967 and Charlotte Mansfield in 1981 evidenced patience and skill in typing "clean copies" of the rough manuscript with its handwritten emendations.

For this publication, Lance Richardson graciously gave permission to use a black and white print of his 1978 award-winning color portrait of Paul Green. And Stacy Wynn offered valuable advice on typeface and layout.

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R.H.W.

# A

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*a*

have. "Pa would-a (would have) been eighty if he'd lived another month."  
of. "What kind-a (kind of) girl you think I am?"

## *Aaron's beard*

Any of several Cape Fear Valley plants having some resemblance to a beard, as the great St. John's wort, Jerusalem Star, the rose of Sharon, etc.

## *Aaron's rod*

A rod which the Bible records was given to Aaron by Moses and with which he performed many magic tricks according to the Lord's commandment. The preachers in the Valley often let their imaginations soar in elocuting in their pulpits about the rod, even identifying it with the rod and staff of comfort spoken of by the Psalmist or the rod with which Jesus was beaten.

Also the penis.

## *ABC book*

The first year primer.

## *ABC song*

We children used to sing it in the old Pleasant Union School to help our memorizing. The tune was to that of "Twinkle, twinkle, little star, O, I wonder what you are, Up above the world so high, Like a diamond in the sky--"

"A-B-C-D-E-F-G  
H-I-J-K-L-MNOP  
Q-R-S and T-U-V  
W-X and Y and Z.  
Oh, how happy I will be  
When I know my ABC."



***abide***

Accept, tolerate, endure. "I reckon I could abide him if he would cut the hair out'n his ears."

***"Abide With Me"***

One of the many beloved hymns in the Valley. This has brought comfort to many a soul in trouble.

"Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.  
The darkness deepens. Lord, with me abide.  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!"

***abigail***

A serving woman, a lady's maid. Also a popular name for a woman in the 18th century. Cf. John Adams' wife Abigail.

***able***

Wealthy or in good financial circumstances. "No wonder Luther's building that great mansion on top of the mountain. He's an able man."

***abortion***

According to the folk belief, a teaspoonful of turpentine taken nine mornings in a row can cause an abortion.

***about***

To be well or better or convalescent. "He's been sick for a long time, but he's about now." Usually as "up and about."

***about out***

Supply almost exhausted.

***about the size of***

Approximately right, near the truth. "That Joe James is a crook and that's about the size of it."

***about to***

On the point of, ready to, almost. "It tickled me so I was about to die."

***above***

More than, in excess of. "I wouldn't charge above a dollar or so." "He lives above a mile from here."

***aboveboard***

Honest, straightforward. "A man who is always aboveboard will come out right in this life."

***abracadabra***

A charm word. Having this word on a piece of paper and carrying it with

you is believed to be a good protection against toothache and bleeding.

*Abraham's bosom*

A haven of rest and safety for worthy souls in the hereafter.

I used to shiver with fear and sympathy when the preachers in the Valley would tell the story of Lazarus and the rich man, and tell it with all sorts of embellishments of terror for sinners. I, who from earliest youth have felt myself a sinner, suffered from their furious onslaughts. In the Gospel of Luke the story is told about a certain beggar, Lazarus, who lay at a rich man's gate full of sores which the dogs came and licked the while he begged for crumbs from this rich man's table. Lazarus died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and went to his reward in hell. And there in the tormenting flames he lifted up his eyes, so the Scriptures say, and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus resting in his bosom, and he begged Abraham to have mercy on him and send Lazarus with but a drop of water to cool his burning tongue. But Abraham wouldn't do it. He said to the rich man that he had received the good things of life while Lazarus received the bad things and now he must suffer his torment — and he meant suffer forever and ever. Thus the father of the chosen people showed no mercy.

What terrible cruelty has the Bible (called holy) — and likewise the Koran — fostered on this earth! And in saying so I do not forget the sweetness and joy of the Sermon on the Mount and other humane teachings of Jesus himself.

*Abram man*

A beggerman, a good-for-nothing.

A slovenly Abram man used to come now and then to our house in the Cape Fear Valley, begging for clothes or food or anything he could get. His name was Good, or he said it was. He carried a "budget," a peddler's pack, on his back and had wild black eyes, gray-streaked beard and stringy hair as long as a woman's. He was unbelievably dirty — a pioneer beatnik or hippie. Once my mother cooked him up a good lunch and we children took it out to him all eager to see him eat with his great crooked hands. He looked at the food and said it wasn't fit for a dog and snarled. My father who was nearby heard the remark and became so angry that he hurried out to the harness room, got a blacksnake whip and came back, popping it through the air. He made for the old man, saying, "I'm going to whip you good, you devil of a Good!" The Abram man jumped up and fled down the road, budget, long hair and all. He never bothered us again.

*Absence* makes the heart grow fonder.

*absotively-posilutely*

Absolutely-positively.

*accident*

To have an uncontrolled bowel or bladder movement. "Look at that poor little boy, he's had an accident in his britches."

*accommodating*

Kind, generous, helpful. "He's one of the most accommodating men you've ever met."

*ace*

A near thing, a close call. "He came within an ace of breaking his neck on them roller skates."

*ace high*

In high esteem, first rate. "General Eisenhower is ace high in my book."

*ace in the hole*

Some special item or strength in reserve.

*ache*

To desire, to yearn. "I'm just aching to go to Wilmington on that excursion."

*Aches and pains* in the body foretell damp weather.

*Aching corns* mean wet weather.

*a-cold*

Cold. "I was so a-cold in that church my teeth chattered."

*acorns*

A heavy crop of acorns, nuts and berries always forecasts a hard winter.

Before the no-fence law came into effect in the Valley the farmers let both their cattle and hogs run loose in the woods, the cattle to feed on reeds and other pickings and the hogs to fatten on acorns in the fall. A brag-porker was one fattened on acorns.

*Act* in the living present.

*action*

A bowel movement. "I had a bad headache last night, but this morning I had a good action and now it's gone away."

A motion picture production directive to actors, technicians, etc. to begin filming.

Suit the *action* to the word.

*Actions* speak louder than words.

*act of God*

A happening or event not explained by any natural or human agency,

therefore thought to be caused by a divine or supernatural power, namely, God.

"Yessir," said Arthur, the yardman, as we were setting camellias behind the lily pool the other day, "Old Moster looks after us many a time when we don't expect it."

"There's no doubt about that, I guess," I responded.

"Ezzactly right," he said. "From hard experience I know that God takes action to help us now and then. He's help me several times, but one time in particular he help me — if he hadn't I' be lying behind penitentiary bars or rotted in the ground from death in the electric chair right now. That's what I would."

"That must have been something, Arthur," I said.

"It was that. Well, sir, there was this girl — that was when I was living down in Wilmington away from here — and I loved her better'n life itself. Couldn't think of nothing but her as I went about my work. I was driving for Mr. Lanchester at the time. And one day he said to me 'Arthur,' he said, 'I see you're a-loving that girl over there, and I think I better tell you she's not what you think — she's two-timing you. She lets you spend money on her, buy her candy and let her have cash now and then — you do, don't you?' 'Yessir,' I said, 'for she's my onliest woman.' 'You may think so,' he said, 'but I know better. There's a long yellow fellow comes to see her at night regular. Rena that cooks for us knows the man that creeps in when you're gone, and Rena says the girl is going to marry him. I thought the only thing to do was to tell you about it so you can save your money and save your feelings too. She's a bad woman.'

"Well, sir, I was all churned up inside and mad enough to eat nails. And right off I determined to kill that yellow man. Not once did I think of harming her. That shows you how much I loved her. So I took my shotgun and lay in wait for that fellow. There was a field behind her house, and that was the way Rena — I found that out from her — said he'd come at night to visit my gal. So I hid in the bushes right after dark waiting for him. And I was going to let him have both barrels as he passed by and drop him in his tracks. Well, I waited awhile, and then all of a sudden a voice spoke to me — it was my mother's voice loud and clear. 'Arthur,' the voice said, 'what are you doing out there in that field with that gun?' 'I'm just out huntin' a little bit, Mama,' I said. 'Hunting, the dog's foot! I know what kind of hunting you're a-doing,' she said. 'Now, boy, you listen to me, get right up from there and go back home. Hear me? Go home!' 'But, Mama,' I said — all ready to make excuse, 'they's plenty of fat rabbits use around here, and —' Well, sir, when my mother spoke, you had to listen to her. You couldn't go against her. No sir. So I shouldered my gun and went on toward home like she told me, leaving that fellow to come by all safe and sound if and when he wanted to come. I was halfway back to the place I boarded

at when all of a sudden I remembered my mother had been dead for ten years or more and was buried way back in Fuquay Springs. Yessir. It was an act of God that saved me. And don't tell me no different."

*act up*

Misbehave, run badly. "My old Ford started to act up, and there I was — stuck."

*act your age*

To behave discreetly, fittingly.

*Adam*

According to the Bible, the first man created by God out of common dirt.

Also a sinful instinct, the bodily appetite, usually referred to as "Old Adam," and everlastingly opposed by the fundamentalist followers of Christ. Godparents in the Episcopal Church stand as sureties at the christening of an infant that the said baby has renounced the devil and all his works and they themselves will strive to their uttermost to see "that the old Adam in this child may be so buried that the new man may be raised up in him" — and "that he may have power and strength to have victory and to triumph against the devil, the world and the flesh. Amen." An agreement not often kept.

Also that instrument of bodily appetite and baby-creating, the penis.

*Adam and Eve*

A curious little flower belonging to the orchid family. Its two bulbs just below the ground are joined together — "Adam and Eve hand in hand." Later the two other bulbs, "Cain and Abel," appear, a close family group. Inside the bulbs is a strong glutinous matter from which the plant is sometimes referred to as "putty root." When this root is chewed or brewed, it is supposed to be good for throat or bronchial trouble.

*Adam and Eve and Pinch-me-tight*

Went to the river and had a fight.

Adam and Eve fell in.

Who was left out?

(A sell rhyme. The answer prompts a good pinch.)

*Adam and Eve on a raft*

Poached eggs on toast.

*Adam and Eve suit*

In the nude.

*Adam and Eve wrecked*

Scrambled eggs.

*Adam's ale*

Water. "Adam's ale is the best ale."

*Adam's apple*

The projection in the front part of the neck, supposedly caused by the apple Adam sinfully swallowed which swelled out his throat as it went down, a swelling that remained.

*Adam's flannel*

See "Indian thistle."

*Adam's needle*

The Spanish needle, yucca, bear grass. This plant, also known as Adam's needle and thread, is becoming more and more popular in the Valley because of its gorgeous column of creamy white flowers. The tincture of the root was once used for rheumatism and gonorrhea.

*Adam's off-ox*

A term of disparagement, a clumsy or unimportant person.

*adder*

After.

*adder's-tongue*

More commonly known as dogtooth violet, this popular southern flower is often called trout flower or trout lily. It was once used as a medicinal herb, the juice to bathe severe eye inflammations and the leaves, applied to wounds and placed gently over chilblains, were therapeutic. Like the sunflower, the adder's-tongue turns its little devoted head to follow its lord the sun and, like the rue anemone, too, it is a perfect flower to tramp the woods for in one's springtime courting days. So did I, so did she.

*addled*

All mixed up, as an addled egg. Also mentally weak, crazy. "Mis' Sara Mims has an addled boy Joe."

*addle-pate*

A confused or feeble-minded person.

*admiration*

Suspense, state of uncertainty. "He kept me in admiration so long that I got plumb nervous."

*Adventist*

A religious sect believing in the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the approaching ending of the world. (Seventh-Day Adventists observe Saturday as the sabbath.)

Like most protestant religions in America, and especially in the Valley, whether Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Holy Rollers or what not, the Adventists maintain that when Jesus appears the second time, he will appear in the air in the east. According to the Scriptures, after his resurrection he was seen by eleven apostles (Judas having hanged himself) for forty days during which time Jesus spoke to them "of things pertaining to the kingdom of God...after which he was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight." Then "two men stood by them in white apparel." And these men said to the apostles, "Why stand ye gazing up in heaven? This same Jesus which was taken up into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

So it is that people wait the second coming and the rising of the dead. And thus the dead are buried in the Valley — and elsewhere — with their feet toward the east and their heads toward the west. They then will rise up on judgment day, when Gabriel blows his horn, with due courtesy and politeness to greet their Savior face forward, for according to Scripture he is like the sun and will appear in the east.

Sweet are the uses of *adversity*.

*Advice* is cheap.

*Advice* when most needed is least heeded.

*afear*

Afraid.

*affect*

To love. "He affected that gal a lot, and when she gave him the go-by, looked like he'd go plumb crazy."

*afflicted*

Deformed, crippled, retarded. "Po' Mis' Matthews, all these years she's had to nuss that afflicted boy of hern."

*afire*

Sensually hot. "Just to look at that girl sets me afire."

*afore*

Before, heretofore, ahead of. "If you don't get a move on with Joe Turner's gal, that Cephus Bowles is going to be there afore you."

*afraid*

Apprehensive, full of worry. "Yes, child, there you come with a woods colt baby sprouting in you, and I was afraid of it."

Be not *afraid*. (Matt. 14:27)

*African golf*

Craps.

*afterclap*

A clap of thunder after lightning, an unexpected payoff, a harsh follow-up.

*afterlife*

Survival after death. A belief held by most people on earth. But more and more of the Valley young people are becoming skeptics along with the scientists.

*“After the Ball”*

A popular song among the Valley people in the early part of the century. I loved to hear my mother sing it as she dressed for church.

“After the ball is over,  
After the break of morn,  
After the dancers’ leaving,  
After the stars are gone.  
Many a heart is aching,  
If you could read them all—  
Many the hopes that have vanished,  
After the ball.”

There were many parodies made on this song. One I especially like was given to me by Margaret Harper, the driving force behind my outdoor drama “Texas.” —

“After the ball was over  
Mary took out her glass eye,  
Put her false teeth in water,  
Washed off her paint and dye,  
Stood her false leg in a corner,  
Hung her right arm on the wall,  
What was left of her went to slumber  
After the ball.”

*After the storm* comes the calm.

*against*

Injurious. “Jesse was a chain smoker and he knowed cigarettes were against him, but he wouldn’t quit, and so now he’s dead as a wedge from lung cancer.”

*against the grain*

Contrarily, unwillingly, unhappily.



*agate*

A marble in the well-known boys' game.

*Age* before beauty.

*Age* makes men older but not better.

*be your age*

Same as act your age.

*age of accountability*

A condition of moral or freewill responsibility a child reaches when he becomes able to tell right from wrong — often referred to as “line of accountability.” Boys are supposed to arrive at this age at ten; girls, being smarter, at nine.

The first time I ever ran into this accountability subject was when I was a little boy about eleven years old. I was a year late. It was such a hellish experience that the details of it are with me to this day.

A big meeting was going on in the neighborhood at the time, and the preacher had spent the night at our house as was the custom around and about among the neighbors during a “protracted meeting” of those days. These big or protracted meetings, or revivals, were customary throughout the countryside during the “laying by time,” that is, during the period when the final plowing, chopping, siding and cleaning out the crops had been finished and a waiting of some two or three weeks ensued. Then would begin the burning, blazing business of fodder-pulling, and after that the cotton-picking and then the cornshucking, the school days coming on in late fall and finally the rich fat wintertime to follow. (Back in those days tobacco — a full crowded year's crop — had not taken over in the Valley as much as it now has.)

Brother Wicker, the old fiery preacher, after prayers the night before, had interviewed me somewhat thus — as his cold blue eye looked holes through me.

“You are past ten years old now, your mother tells me,” he said.

“Yessir,” I gulped, “soon be ’leven.”

“Uh-huh,” he said as his long-fingered hands writhed themselves together, a nervous habit I had noticed in him before, especially when he was going good in the pulpit. “So you’ve reached the age of accountability — ain’t that right? You can tell the difference between right and wrong,” he went on. And before I knew it he had made me promise to go to the mourners’ bench at next day’s meeting and repent of my sins and find my Savior.

I slept very little that long, long night.

Somehow I lasted through the sermon the next day, and the singing

to follow. Then when the call came, I managed to go down the aisle and kneel barefooted at the anxious bench (also called the mourners' bench) along with older and more sinful creatures such as Eddie Kirk Maxton, who fired the boiler at the neighbor's sawmill and who could never get up steam except to much chewing of tobacco, loud hollering and rollings of profanity. The soles of my bare feet were turned toward the congregation, and my repenting tears were wetting my fingers spread over my face. Then Brother Wicker came and knelt beside me, and his bad breath from his decaying teeth blew in on me. He thumped me on the back with the flat of his mighty hand. "Give it up! Give it up!" he shouted. "Let Jesus into your heart! Let Him in! He will save you, save you now! Pray for grace! Pray!" And with a final and devastating blow to my poor little scrawny shoulders, he moved over to belabor Eddie Kirk.

I prayed for grace as he ordered but could feel no grace. The consciousness of my bare feet bothered me, and then my waist (blouse) — the one my mother had made with lace around the collar — kept sliding up above my cloth belt, leaving my back bare, and I could feel the fish-hooking eyes of a hundred people digging into my naked skin. Even so when later Brother Wicker called for all the new converts to stand together before the pulpit and receive the right hand of fellowship, I was lined up right there straight among them, and I knew I was a low-down hypocrite and no more saved than a snake had hips. But I would commit most any kind of sin, I knew too, to get out of that dreadful situation.

So it was that I was "saved from nature to grace" and three weeks later was baptized with the others in the Reuben Matthews millpond. And since that time I have bothered no more about the age of accountability or the grace that saves. See "baptizing."

*aggervate*

Aggravate.

*to agg on*

To incite, to rouse to anger, to encourage unduly. Same as egg on.

as *agile* as a monkey

*agin*

Against.

*agin the government*

Obstreperous, anti-social.

*agony column*

A newspaper column in which correspondents express their troubles and usually get too-easy answers.

*agribble*

Agreeable.

*agrimony*

A common plant throughout the Valley. It was used as a tonic and also for asthma and as a vermifuge.

*ague bark*

The water ash or swamp dogwood. The bark was often used for a tonic and the chewed leaves aided in digestion.

*ague tree*

See "sassafras."

*ague weed*

The stiff gentian, also called gall weed. In the old days tea made from it was used as a tonic to purify the blood as well as to help in female disorders.

*ague wood*

Sometimes known as snakeroot.

*ahint*

Behind or behind.

*aholt*

Hold of. "When that horse bolted, I tried to get ahold of the reins."

*aig*

Egg.

*ail*

To be different from others, also to mope about. "What ails him."

*Ailanthus*

See "tree of heaven" or "stink tree."

If *ails* stay at home,

Rain will soon come.

If they fly away,

Fine will be the day.

(Weather proverb.)

*aily*

Ill, not well.

*aim*

Intend. "I aim to do it if I live long enough."

If you don't *aim* high, you'll never hit high.

*ain't*

Is not, am not.

*air*

Are. I can remember as a boy that most of the old people in the Valley did like their Elizabethan forebears — they pronounced “are” as “air,” also “joint” as “j'int.”

*air, airn*

Any or one. “Have you got air knife?” “No, I ain't got airn.”

*air, airy*

Either one. “I couldn't tell air (airy) one from t'other.”

*in the air*

Rumored. “It's in the air that the two of them are planning to get married.”

*airing the lungs*

Shouting, running off at the mouth, being too loud in one's talk.

*airish*

Cool, windy. “This room's airish, you'd better close that there door.”

*air one's dirty linen*

To tell facts about one's intimate troubles and mistakes which would be better left untold.

*airs*

Pretentiousness, conceit. “There that woman comes stepping along and putting on airs.”

*Battle of Alamance*

A famous battle that took place at the head of the Valley when in 1771 — four years before Lexington — some embattled farmers, known as Regulators, rebelled against the tax gatherers of the British Governor William Tryon. They were defeated and six of their number were hanged in a grove at Hillsborough. Strange as it may seem, these Regulators later were Tories.

*alder*

A shrub that grows plentifully along streams and in swamps in the Valley. In the old days we boys chewed the bark and spat out its red juice profusely, pretending that we were chewing tobacco. Also, local baseball pitchers chewed it in the place of slippery elm to help them throw spit balls. A gargle made from the bark was supposed to cure sore throat, and it was used also for an emetic as well as for tanning and dyeing.

*Ale* sellers shou'd na be tale tellers.

as *alike* as two peas in a pod

*all*

Belongings, property. "He was sick so long it took his all to pay the hospital."

The only. "They were all the men I ever saw hung." "That's all the help I could get."

Everyone, for inclusive emphasis. "We all." "You all."

The family, the relatives, the near relatives. "How's all?" "Just well as common."

*All* is not gold that glistens.

*All* that a man hath will he give for his life.

*All* that live must die.

*All* the keys hang not at one man's girdle.

*All* the speed is in the spurs.

*All* the world's a stage.

*all about*

Everything, the complete story, all the details. "Tell me all about what you've been doing."

*all alone*

Single, individual, lonely. "There I was in that big field all alone and the snow pouring."

*all along*

All the while. "All along I knew that man was a crook."

*all and some*

Inclusive of everybody or everything.

*all arms and legs*

Awkward, adolescent.

*all ass and no body*

A loud talker, a boaster, a show-off.

*all at sea*

Confounded, confused, at a loss.

*all but*

Almost, nearly. "We're all but home now."

*all by her (his, its) lonesome*

Entirely alone.

*all covered up*

Over-committed, extremely busy, with an overfull schedule. "We got so few cabs here in Fayetteville our boys stay all covered up."

*allemande*

A command or call for a particular move in a square dance at which the men turn the ladies to the left and return to their partners.

*up my alley*

Suitable, easy for me, exactly what I wanted.

*all fingers and thumbs*

Awkward.

*all-fired*

Absolutely, completely. Used for emphasis and intensification. "That preacher made me so all-fired mad scaring the little children half to death with his hell-fire sermon that I felt like standing up in the church then and there and telling him to shut his big blabbing mouth!"

*all-fours*

To be on one's hands and feet or knees like an animal.

"I was passing by along in the night when there come a racket in the fence jamb, and I thought some hogs were in there, and I let out a loud 'sooeey, sooeey!' Then all of a sudden Henry came out on his all-fours, holding to his half-off britches. And then I seen a woman there in the shadow lying spread out flat on her back and her dress drawed up beyond her knees. She was so far gone in love or drunk one she had no shame.

" 'You won't tell on me, will you, Lem?' Henry said, still on his all-fours, looking pitifully up at me in the star-shine, his head hanging to one side, and his hand jiggling at his pants.

" 'No, I won't, Henry,' I said.

"And I ain't never told it till now, Paul, and it don't matter no more, for both Henry and the woman are long gone to their final resting place where there's neither love nor giving in love anymore."

*all front and no back door*

A phony, irresponsible person, a pretender.

*all get and no give*

Greediness, self-centeredness.

*all get out*

Intensely, entirety. "He works his hands like all get out when he talks."

"That beats all get out."

*all give and no get*

Service, devotion without thanks or return.

*all gone*

Deeply in love, infatuated, absorbed.

Also tired out, done in.

Consumed. "The cookies are all gone."

*"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"*

A popular hymn.

As a boy I admired Ian Matthews' tenor soaring away in Sunday service there at Old Neill's Creek Baptist Church. I went there now and then because it was near my country sweetheart's home.

"All hail the power of Jesus' name,  
Let angels prostrate fall!  
Bring forth the royal diadem  
And crown him Lord of all."

And so on through a stirring missionary proclamation—

"Let every kindred, every tribe  
On this terrestrial ball  
To him all majesty ascribe  
And crown him Lord of all."

Still, for these vivid and consoling words I have just as vivid remembrance of an occasion connected with them in which I was involved — vivid and painful. Our male quartet — consisting of Ernest Spence, Rass Matthews, Gordon Long and myself — was to sing this hymn at an Easter service in the old church. For the occasion I had bought a new suit from the merchant Ransome Taylor in Dunn, costing five dollars — on a credit. We fellows did ourselves proud in the quartet, and I was especially pleased that my yellow-haired girl was in the congregation sitting in the front pew. Later among the folks outside she complimented me on my second tenor. Then with a little giggle she pointed to the front of my coat. "The next time you sing in public like that," she said, "you ought to cut the price tag off your suit. Folks all around me could see it where it said 'Price—\$5.' "

The world was ruined for me for a week or so. And I have never particularly liked that song however much my neighbors and Ian loved it.

*all his buttons*

All his wits. "You needn't try to trick Cousin Henry, he's got all his buttons, old as he is."

*all hollow*

Thoroughly, completely. "We played Fuquay yesterday and beat 'em all hollow."

*all how*

Completely how. "He told me all how he got that way."

*Allicomgreenzie*

A game, same as Drop the Handkerchief.

*all in*

Whipped down, tired out. Same as done in.

*all its worth*

Completely, entirely, as fully as possible.

*all kinds*

Many, much, a lot, a great deal. "That fellow's got all kinds of money."

*All meat* is to be eaten, all maids to be wed.

*All men* can't be masters.

*all mops and brooms*

Very drunk.

*all of a heap*

Nonplussed, astounded, speechless. "That bad news hit me all of a heap."

*all of a stew*

Disordered, in a mess, topsy-turvy, turned upside-down. "Brother Goff and Brother King are coming for the protracted meeting and my house is all of a stew."

*all one*

All the same, the same result, of no importance particularly. "It's all one to me whether you buy my land or not."

*all outdoors*

Totally, completely. "He's as mean as all outdoors."

*all over*

The entire body, completely. "I hurt all over." "He's a liar all over."

Ended. "The children were sad when the show was all over."

*all-overs*

Fidgets, nervousness, mild willies, also called the "hicumstrikes." "To look at a snake just gives me the all-overs."



*allow, 'low*

To be of the opinion, to think, believe, intend. "I 'low you might make it." "I allowed as how I'd go over there, but I ain't never done it."

*allowance*

A ration, quantity of goods or pay. "You've not give the children their 'lowance this week, and they're all sore at you."

*all prick and no pence*

Pretense, all front and no back, a show-off. "Them soldiers come in here all fired up — it was all prick and no pence."

*all right*

Satisfactory as to manner and condition.

*all screwed up*

Tangled up, in a mess, topsy-turvy.

*all set*

Ready, on the qui vive, satisfied, in comfort. "How're you doing this morning?"—"I'm all set."

*all sore*

Angry.

*all sorts and sizes*

Every kind of thing, used inclusively.

*All squeal and no wool*, as the devil said when he sheared his hogs.

A lot of effort amounting to nothing, much ado and little result.

*All's well that ends well.**all that*

A great deal, much. "What are you going to do with all that money?"

*all the*

Used for comparison. "Is that all the fast you can run?" "Is that all the good you can do?"

*all the go*

The style, fitting the fashion, popular taste and custom.

*all there*

Sane, sensible, long-headed, of sound judgment. The opposite, "not all there," is often used in speaking of one touched with lunacy.

*All things* work for the good of those that love the Lord.

*“All Through the Night”*

A favorite song.

*all thumbs*

Awkward.

*all to pieces*

Ruined, collapsed, broken to flinders. “When she heard her husband had been killed in France, she went all to pieces.”

*allus*

Always.

*all wet*

Wrong, ignorant, mistaken.

“You’re all wet about Billy Graham’s being an influence for good,” said Uncle Myron, “not with him selling Christ-and-him-crucified the way you sell stocks and bonds or a blood purifier or this Geritol stuff and all with a lot of publicity and ballyhoo, and at the same time whooping it up for devotion to the flag and the killing of the boys in Vietnam for the sacred cause of patriotism. Maybe he thinks the quicker they’re killed the quicker they’ll get to heaven.”

*the almanac*

Next to the Bible, the wisdom book of the Cape Fear Valley farmers. My father always kept his almanac hung on a nail by the fireplace where it was handy for reading. He treasured it for its information on the diseases of animals and human beings, its recipes, its household advice, its directions on soil and crops, table of postal rates, how to make hens lay more eggs, character readings, and especially for its weather forecasts for each month of the year. And both he and I used to ponder the page given over to the zodiac. See “zodiac.” In the trimming of cattle and hogs these signs were most carefully considered. Also in the old days women baked bread and weaned their babies by them.

Although the almanac is not considered the authority it once was in the Valley, still it is popular and is widely sold and distributed today.

*The Almighty*

God, Jehovah, maker and ruler of the universe.

*“Almost Persuaded”*

An old hymn.

“Almost persuaded, harvest is past.  
Almost persuaded, doom comes at last.  
Almost cannot avail,

Almost is but to fail.  
 Sad, sad, that bitter wail,  
 Almost, but lost!"

And I, a little fellow, would shiver and shake as I stared across at some of the unregenerate sinners who would not yield to the pleadings of the preacher to save themselves from future torment in hell.

It is not good that man should be *alone*.

*along*

Because of, on account of. "It was along of you talking so damn much that I got into that mess with Lona's daddy."

*along the line of*

In a planned direction, connected with the same subject, in line with. "Along the line of what you're saying, I say force is the only thing that'll make 'em behave."

*alpha and omega*

The beginning and the end.

*an also ran*

A defeated candidate, a horse coming in in last place.

*althea*

A very popular shrub, most often found around Negro cabins and houses. Another name is rose of Sharon. It was introduced from Asia and has become so popular with its beautiful cotton-bloom blossoms that many baby girls in the Valley are named for it.

*alum*

A good Valley remedy to stop bleeding. The old midwives were wont to use it to help heal up a new mother.

*alumroot*

Spotted geranium or wild geranium. It is common in the Valley and was used medically by the Indians and early settlers. A drink made from boiling the roots and leaves was supposed to be good for dysentery and diarrhea. Some old folks also used to say it was good for sore throat and ulcerations of the mouth, as well as general stomach disorders.

*a-many*

Many. "A-many man has hung himself with a woman's skirt."

*amaranth*

Also known as thorny amaranth or prickly careless-weed. It is widely scattered in the Valley and elsewhere in the south and grows as well in waste

places as it does in the garden. Like cabbage leaves, Jimson leaves and leaves of the mullein, the amaranth leaves were used to heal bites, wounds and all sorts of hurts, including nail-punctured feet. This plant was also referred to sometimes as pigweed. It was a curse to the Valley farmer like crabgrass, Johnson grass and nut grass.

*amaryllis*

Sometimes called colic root because of its poisonous nature. It is now one of the brag flowers in a Valley garden.

*“Amazing Grace”*

One of the Valley people’s most comforting hymns through the years, even more comforting, say, than such old favorites as “Blessed Assurance,” “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing,” “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” or “Sweet Hour of Prayer.”

And though the hymn is written in three-four time, it went well with my mother’s churning. Up and down, up and down her dasher moved in the churn, the while she sang—

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost but now am found,  
Was blind but now I see.”

I never did care to hear her say “a wretch like me.”

Like so many of her hymns, this one served somewhat as a labor accompaniment as well as a testimonial of religious faith during her ever busy, busy life. (She was the mother of seven children, did all the cooking and housekeeping till some of us, especially my sister Mary, were large enough to help in the four-room house, sewed for the neighbors, both the living and the dead, kept a little home post office, sent butter and eggs for sale down to Buie’s Creek Academy, played the organ in the church, and now and then wrote a bit of poetry, some of which appeared in the Lillington newspaper.)

Once when my father spoke of her working so hard, she answered — I was a little boy standing by and heard her — the reason, she said, was that she wanted the family to get ahead, that “our children, Billy, can get an education, can have a chance to amount to something.” She was a great believer in education.

Often we children felt as she churned, or we churned for her, that “Amazing Grace” was too slow in bringing results, so we’d stand around the churn and chant over and over in our shrill voices—

“Come, butter, come,  
For I want some!  
Come, butter, come,

For I want some!"

And when we told her our song was better than hers, she smiled, pushed back her lovely dark hair with her firm-fingered hand and said, "They both help bring the butter."

She died too early from hardship and overwork. As the poet puts it more or less, "her reach exceeded her grasp." And then he adds that's as it should be "or what's a heaven for?"

I well could add and do, "why not a hell as well?"

*ambeer*

Tobacco spittle or juice.

*ambitious*

Dangerous, irritable, bad-tempered, easily angered. "You better watch that sow with her new pigs, she's an ambitious hussy."

*ambrosia*

Same as wild wormseed. See "Jerusalem oak."

*ambulance chaser*

A greedy lawyer or his agent, also an undertaker.

*amen*

A Hebrew word used in English now to end a prayer or song and also to agree heartily, as "Amen to the president's war on poverty."

*amen corner*

In the old country churches in the Valley there were three areas as to seating the congregation. On the right from the pulpit's point of view was the old women's corner, and on the left the old men's corner. These were called amen corners, from whence often during the preaching the "amens" would sound in loud confirming, or not, the doctrine being preached. The rambunctious young and middle-aged people, more subject to sinfulness, sat in the middle of the church out in front of the pastor. I can remember at Pleasant Union, the church I once attended and where I was "converted," that one Sadie Morgan, one of the young girls who used to sit out in front, had a bastard baby and when she returned to church she naturally took a subdued and humble place over among the old women in their amen corner. And often while the preachers thundered away on the carnality of man, she would nurse her baby unashamed from a lovely full breast, a breast which had been part of her undoing in the first place.

*"America"*

The popular patriotic song, strong and determined.

*“America the Beautiful”*

A charming song with less dogma and more beauty in it.

*“Am I a Soldier of the Cross?”*

Old popular hymn with its “blessed assurance” and its ethical admonition.

“Must I be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease,  
While others fought to win the prize,  
And sailed thro’ bloody seas?”

*a-mind*

Disposed to, inclined to. “I’m a-mind to go down there and beat hell out of him for saying my son was a whore-hopper.”

*amongst*

Among.

Also a group, others, additional ones. “He went with Ed and amongst ’em.”

*an*

If. “An he don’t pay that debt, I’m going to get him where the hair is short.”

*ana mana*

A counting-out rhyme in a children’s game for deciding who is to be “It.”

“Ana mana, dippery dick,  
Delia dolia dominick,  
Hotcha potcha dominotcha  
Hy-uh pon tus—  
O-u-t spells out,  
On your way home.”

*Ananias*

A liar.

*anarchy*

See “Phil McNeill.”

*anchorman*

A central man in any setup, one on whom the main responsibility rests.

*and how!*

Manner, ways, means, condition intensified. “If you young’uns don’t behave, I’m going to tan your hide — and how!”

*aneath*

Beneath.

*anemone*

See “rue anemone.”

*anenst*

Against.

*angel*

In Christian belief a spiritual and celestial being who acts as a messenger of God. Also has reference to the conscience, as one's good angel or bad angel. There are many important angels, one of them being Gabriel. For to him God has assigned the future duty of blowing his trumpet to mark the coming of the judgment day and the ending of the world.

Speak of an *angel* and you can hear the rustle of wings.

*angel food cake*

A light white cake made with whites of eggs, flour and sugar — no butter.

Be on the side of the *angels*.

*angel's-trumpet*

The aristocratic sister flower of the lowly Jimson (Jamestown) weed and with a bloom just as malodorous. Both the leaves and the seeds are poisonous but can be used as a cathartic or emetic. We children used to have fun chasing hawk moths as they fluttered around the blooms in the dewy evenings. Also we used the blooms to extend our fingers. See "Jimson weed."

*angry*

Red, raw, swollen. "The flesh around that cut place is angry. You'd better do something about it."

*anigh*

Near.

The *animal* in man knows no history.

*animal magnetism*

A mystic force which certain human beings are said to be gifted with. Such persons are supposed to be psychic and have hypnotic and healing power and, according to the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University, they score extraordinarily high in extrasensory perception tests.

*Animal, Vegetable, Mineral*

A children's guessing game.

*ankle*

To walk, to go afoot. "Son, you ankle on down the road there and buy me a plug of tobacco at the store."

*to break an ankle*

An illegitimate pregnancy, also “break a leg.” “I hear that Jess Jones’ Sadie has broke her ankle.” “Oh-oh, too bad.”

*“Annie Laurie”*

The ever fresh and popular Scotch love song. This was one of our male quartet favorites.

A soft *answer* turneth away wrath.

*Answer* a fool according to his folly.

*’ant*

Want. “I ’ant the doctor to look at my sore tooth, please.”

*ante up*

To show one’s honest intent, to make a down payment. “If you folks wantere ante up, then put your money where your mouth is, and I’ll deal.”

*Antichrist*

A fabled enemy of Christ and his teachings, an enemy of man and God also, who according to Biblical legend and the Christian belief will fill the world with evil until he is conquered by Christ’s second coming. Recently I heard Lonnie Cofield, the Valley wit, say that from the looks of things in this strife-torn country of ours, Christ better hurry and come or Antichrist will get too muscled up for him to handle.

*antics*

A fit of anger. “Every time I wash my boy’s hands, he puts on a tirade of antics, and I don’t know what to do with him.”

*antigodlin*

Out of line, awry, leaning, not in a plumb line. “Earsie Jenkins has a new house, and every wall is antigodlin.”

*Anti-Over or Ant’ny Over*

See “Hail Over.”

*ant rice*

See “wire grass.”

When *ants* are especially busy, bad weather is coming, and when they are especially thick, a war is coming.

An *anvil* laughs at many broken hammers.

One *anvil* wears many hammers out.



*anxious bench*

In the old days the church custom was to have a bench, or maybe several benches if sinners were numerous, placed in front of the pulpit, with some open space between it and the congregation. Often hay was spread on the floor around the bench so that those who were caught in a paroxysm of penitence or of joy and became wild and cavorting in their movements would not hurt themselves or get their Sunday clothes dirty. In our neighborhood we also called it "the mourners' bench." Under the power of the preacher and the singing and shouting, the sinners often trooped down the aisles and flung themselves at the bench and cried aloud for forgiveness for their sins and salvation for their undone condition.

This anxious bench custom is passing away now in the Valley, people becoming more mechanics-practiced and flagrant in their manners and not feeling the presence of the devil and the conviction of their souls with the intensity once they did. The Moody and Sankey hymn tunes, such as "Almost Persuaded" and "There's a Great Day Coming," were especially powerful in my childhood for the conviction of sinners. I can still remember with what harsh pity some of the believing ones would look at sinful Malcolm Norris on the last night of the big meeting and he still unrepentant and woman-hungry, while the congregation in dolorous condemnation sang—

"There's a sad day coming,  
A sad day coming.  
There's a sad day coming by and by  
When the sinner shall hear his doom,  
'Depart, I know you not!'  
Are you ready for that day to come?"

And I as a boy would gaze across at Malcolm in horror, seeing him in my mind's eye, because of his heinous crimes, already br'iling in the torrent flames of hell.

*any old how*

In a careless haphazard manner, hit or miss. "I helped him build his house to bring his bride to, and we put it up any old how, yessir, put it up in one day before sundown, and Johnny then hurried off to git her."

*any way, shape, form or fashion*

Under whatever condition, in whatever way. "That woman might fix herself up in any way, shape, form or fashion under the sun and she'd still be a vulgar hussy."

*A-one*

First rate, honest, reliable. "Terry Sanford was an A-one governor."

*apern*

Apron.

*apostle*

One of the twelve disciples of Christ sent forth to preach.

Also the male organ which is known by multitudinous names — “John Hancock,” “John Henry,” etc.

What is done by night *appears* by day.

An *apple* a day keeps the doctor away;  
An onion a day keeps everybody away.

*Apple*

A popular brand of chewing tobacco.

*apple-bobbing*

A game in which young people used to put apples in a bowl of water and try to bite them as they floated. Most often the boy and girl got in more nose-rubbing and kisses in the game than they did apple bites.

*apple cart*

A plan, project, a business, a matter of concern. “They ain’t no doubt about it a-tall, on that judgment day old Satan’s gonna get his apple cart upset, and I mean upset.”

*apple cider*

The fermented juice of the apple. This used to be a most popular drink in the Valley, and nearly every farmer had his apple orchard and his keg or barrel of cider in the fall. It was believed the apples had to be gathered on the waning of the moon or they would shrink up. Horse apples were said to make the best cider.

*apple dumpling*

A popular southern dish, made usually by covering the apple or apples with pie dough and cooking well.

Also a woman’s breast.

*apple jack*

Brandy distilled from apple cider, a strong and almost venomous drink.

*apple of one’s eye*

A favorite person.

*apple of Peru*

Same as the Peruvian bluebell. This plant is common in the wastelands of North Carolina. It was once used as a diuretic. Also used as a fly poison.

*apple of Sodom*

A kind of horse nettle, also called bull nettle and wild tomato. This Sodomy pest used to play havoc with our bare feet as children, especially if the dead dried plants chopped up by the hoe were stepped on. The thorns were sharp as little needles.

*apple pie order*

Clean and neat arrangement, excellent housekeeping. "You ought to see Althea's home — all in apple pie order."

*apple root*

A large flowering spurge. A tincture of the root was used as a purgative.

*apples*

Testicles.

*as sure as God made little apples*

Very sure indeed.

*apple sauce*

Nonsense, foolish flattery, much like soft soap.

*apple toddy*

A drink made of apple brandy, water and sugar and served with hot roasted apples.

*apricock*

Apricot.

*April fool*

A catch or sell, a trick. The first of April is known as "April fool's day," and often we young people in the Valley would have fun with a gullible fellow. We'd send him on an errand, for instance to borrow a neighbor's left-handed monkey wrench, a square auger knife, a few one-foot postholes, or a handful of square pegs, for, as we told him, "the east wind had blown up a special use for them."

*April showers* are like women's tears, easy to wet and easy to dry.

*April showers* bring May flowers.

*apron*

The part of a plough used to throw the dirt each way in splitting out middles.

*apron-high*

Pregnant. We used to sing a song in the Valley called "Careless Love," a stanza of which ran as follows—

"When she wore her apron low,

The boys they hung about her do'.  
Now she wears her apron high,  
All the boys they pass on by."

*apron man*

A waiter.

*apron strings*

Feminine domination, control of a man by a woman, especially by a wife.

There's an old saying in the Valley that of all the strings — whether hamestring, shoestring, tiestring, cross-string, or bow string — the strongest of all strings is a woman's apron strings.

Sudie May Wicker was one of the liveliest girls in the country, and she had an eye out for the boys all right. And Martin Ray was wild about her from the first day when he saw her sitting up near the front in Shady Grove Church, her pink cheeks framed in curls and her clear soprano voice pouring out the favorite old hymn—

"Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow,  
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

—from her full red lips.

Martin was a rising young merchant in Elizabethtown and as good a catch for a woman as you could imagine. It was no surprise then when he and Sudie Mae were married. For a while things went along well, but no baby came to brighten Martin's home. And folks with their long tongues of course would be saying the reason why was that Sudie Mae kept it from happening by drinking cotton-stalk root tea on the sly or using baking soda in a certain way. For her interest in men continued. Martin became harassed in his soul and imagination, and when he had to go to Raleigh or Durham or Richmond to buy goods for his store in town, he was in a dither to get back home, he being so uneasy about Sudie Mae the way he was. He had especially grown uneasy, as it came out later in the trial, after he had seen her casting looks in the church at handsome young Hugh Morgan who was back home on a vacation from the university up at Chapel Hill.

One summer night Martin returned home earlier than he had been expected and he found young Hugh and Sudie Mae in what was spoken of in common parlance as a "compromising position." By this time he had worried so much that his mind was ready to fly to flinders on the least provocation and, of course, in running into such a spectacle he went to pieces altogether, grabbed up a butcher knife and cut young Hugh to death right there in the house. But harm a hair of her precious pretty head, not he. Then he tried to kill himself by cutting his own throat, but the doctors saved him. Later he was tried for his life and got a penitentiary sentence, a pretty stiff one, twenty-five years behind bars. Some folks said the reason he got such a harsh sentence was that the young prosecuting attorney, Eben Trotter,

had already begun to make eyes at Sudie Mae, or she at him, and he pushed the case to get a death sentence. But the sympathies of the people were with Martin, and the storm of feeling against Sudie Mae in the neighborhood got to be so strong now that she left there. It's not certain just what happened to her, though Slim Whitaker said recently he had seen her waiting on tables in a cafe in New Bern.

A petition is going the rounds now for the Governor to pardon Martin. I have signed it along with hundreds of others. Perhaps he will be pardoned, but in the meantime his business has gone to bankruptcy and another man is the leading merchant in the town in his stead now.

As old Mr. Mac, the Valley philosopher, said, an apron string can often be more than a string — it can be a noose to hang you with.

*apt*

Inclined to, usually tending to. "It's apt to rain from the looks of the sky."

*apt as not*

As likely as not.

*aptitude test*

Shortcut tests given by educational leaders, scientists, they call themselves, to get an answer, and most often a phony one, as to the potentialities or talents of a student for certain kinds of work or study, leading to a more than likely successful career. The Valley schools are full of these tests nowadays, along with a lot of other scientific techniques.

*apt to*

Likely to.

*a-purpose*

Intentionally. "He hit me in the eye a-purpose."

*Arabian Balsam of Gilead*

Carolina poplar. A tincture of the bark was good for chest troubles and rheumatism.

*arborvitae*

Tree of life. A kind of cedar. A tincture from its twigs and leaves was a good tonic.

*trailing arbutus*

A very delicate and much admired little flower. How many miles have my wife and I tramped the woods searching for this shy and heavenly sweet "ground laurel." We once found a colony of it just north of old Barbecue Church near the spring where Flora MacDonald and her stalwart husband Allen used to worship and listen to Reverend John McLeod's sermons in both Gaelic and English. We keep it growing in our wildflower plot as best we can.

*archives of gravity*

Everlasting record, the book of life in the hereafter. “Yes sir, I ’spect my name to be written there forever in the archives of gravity, and St. Peter can p’int to ’em any time he wants to, saying, ‘Here is a beloved servant in whom we are well-pleased.’ ”

*area*

A term common to and popular with teachers and public lecturers denoting the field of discussion or interest. “In the area of civil rights we were making great progress till all hell broke loose in Newark and Detroit.”

*a’ready*

Already.

*“Are You Washed in the Blood?”*

Another consoling and big meeting favorite.

I can still see Cousin Joe Long standing by the organ, played by his niece Flora Long, beating time with his chubby hand and leading us all in a fervent rendition—

“Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Are you fully trusting in his grace this hour?

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

Chorus:

“Are you washed? (Are you washed?) in the blood  
(in the blood)

In the soul-cleansing blood of the Lamb? (of the Lamb?)

Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow?

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

And even as we sang, my youthful inner query would continue — “How can something be washed in blood and come out white as snow?”

Only years later, after I did more thinking and reading and studying philosophy and religious writings, including much of St. Thomas Aquinas, was I able to see that religious faith — the kind I was acquainted with in the Valley — depended on believing the unbelievable. To believe the believable was easy and obvious and required no faith.

*argify*

To argue.

*Arizona nightingale*

A donkey, a jackass.

*Arkansas toothpick*

A long-bladed stiletto knife. Also Arizona toothpick.

*“Arkansas Traveler”*

A popular fiddle and talking piece. My brother Will used to love this and was a whiz in it with both banjo and fiddle, but without talking. (Like Charlie Chaplin, he played left-handed.)

My old friend John Riardon was well-known in the Valley for his performance of “The Traveler,” both talking and fiddling. He had another claim to local distinction too. It was said he would put on a clean shirt every day, but on top of the one he already had on. So come Sunday morning he was ready to begin again. I remember once he came to our house, bringing his fiddle as always but this time without a bow. He had broken the only one he had and was waiting for another he had ordered from Sears and Roebuck. When we children begged him for “The Traveler,” he asked us to find him a bow. Of course, we couldn’t, but he was both a devoted musician and a man of ingenuity. He went to the woodpile, found a flat lightwood piece of fence rail, split out a long splinter, and, back in the house, fiddled away with the splinter, the resin or rosin in it serving to bring forth some sort of string response. And we children stood joyously around him. He carried on the old dialogue between an imaginary farmer and a traveler who had lost his way — playing the while.

TRAVELER: Hello, stranger.

FARMER: Hello yourself. If you want to go to hell, why, go there yourself.

TRAVELER: (Looking about him.) Why don’t you cover your house here? (He gestures toward the unseen house.)

FARMER: Can’t cover it when it’s raining, and when it’s dry, it don’t leak a drop.

TRAVELER: (Gazing about him again.) What makes your corn look so yellow?

FARMER: Fool, I planted the yellow kind.

TRAVELER: Um-um. How did your ’taters turn out?

FARMER: Didn’t turn out, fool. I dug ’em out.

TRAVELER: Say, how far is it to where the road forks?

FARMER: Been living here fifty years and it ain’t forked yet.

TRAVELER: Reckon I can ford Little River down there?

- FARMER: Reckon so, any goose can.
- TRAVELER: Look! Yonder comes a steer. You better head him.
- FARMER: I gad, looks like he's got a head on him.
- TRAVELER: I mean stop him.
- FARMER: I ain't got no stopper.
- TRAVELER: I mean turn him.
- FARMER: Don't need no turning. He's already got the hairy side out.
- TRAVELER: Well, well, well. Say, you have lived here all your life?
- FARMER: No, fool, for I ain't dead yet.
- TRAVELER: Mercy's sake! You don't answer anything. You sure are ignorant.
- FARMER: I may be ignorant, but I ain't lost! Ha ha!

And Riardon wound up with a flourish while we children hopped up and down, squealing with delight. We begged him to go on with another favorite, "Leather Britches," but Mother came out then, sweat on her brow as usual, and said dinner was ready. "Everybody go and wash his face and hands."

See "school-breaking."

*arm*

The end of the axle tree that goes into the hub of the wagonwheel.

Stretch your *arm* no farther than your sleeve will reach.

*an arm and a leg*

An excessive price. "If you eat in that place, it'll cost you an arm and a leg."

*arm baby*

A baby too young to stand, contrasted with a knee baby, who is, say, unable to walk.

*armful*

A fat or roly-poly woman.

*arn*

Iron. "That hickory log was hard as arn." Also as a verb "to arn."



*around*

To be present in strength. "When it comes to settling the race question by fist and skull in this country, yes sir, son, I'll be around," said Ernie, the new Ku Klux Klan member.

In the neighborhood of. "A mole around the neck means money by the peck."

*around-about*

Nearly. "She's around-about forty years old."

*around the corner*

Anticipated, just ahead.

*around the house*

Ordinary usage. "Don't bother about that shirt. I'm just going to wear it around the house."

*arrowhead*

A plant of the water plantain family found plentifully along the Valley streams and in swampy places and becoming more and more a favorite decorating and aerating feature in lily ponds.

*arrowhead hunting*

One of our happy pastime occupations as children was hunting the ploughed fields for Indian arrowheads. They were few and far between but common enough to keep us always on the lookout and conscious somewhat of a perished people who once lived where we walked.

*arsh potatoes*

Irish potatoes.

*arsle out*

To back out, same as weasel out.

*arsy-versy*

Upside down, topsy-turvy, also vice versa.

*arter*

After.

*artichoke*

A popular watery tuber, much used in the Valley for pickles. The kind we grew were called "Jerusalem artichokes," also "earth apples." My mother used to make artichoke pickles and for me they were a total watery loss. But many people like them. Dr. H.R. Totten of the Botany Department at UNC once brought us a handful of tubers, and now looking out the window across the garden I can see plants flourishing seven feet tall. The

rich ground there is alive with tasteless tubers. The Indians were said to have enjoyed them as succulent food.

*article*

A person, used in a derogatory sense. "He's a slick article, that fellow."

*arum*

A swamp and stream plant, associate of arrowheads, pipeworts, yellow-eyed grasses and other acid soil aquatics and becoming a feature of lily ponds. Often called wild calla or water-arum. It is a beautiful addition in our lily pool in the summer and is said to be poisonous. We have never tried to find out.

*as*

Used as a conjunction. "Them as has gits."

*asafetida*

Wear a lump of asafetida tied around the neck with a string to keep off contagious diseases.

*Ascension*

The legend that forty days after his resurrection Christ ascended into heaven, there to sit on the right hand of God, the Holy Ghost on the left, awaiting the end of the world and the bringing on of judgment day when He will descend to earth again "to judge the quick and the dead."

*Ascension Day*

The Thursday forty days after Easter on which day Christ's ascension into heaven is commemorated.

*ashamed*

Shy. "That one's named Phyllis, but she's so ashamed she won't look at a stranger."

*ash bin*

A receptacle for ashes and other refuse.

*ash cake*

Cornbread baked in live ashes. Usually called "hoecake" from the old practice of baking it on a hot hoe in the fireplace.

*as how*

An idiomatic substitute for "that." "He 'lowed as how he'd up and do it."

*As I was going down the road,*

I met Mr. Tairpin and I met Mr. Toad.

The toad and the tairpin begun to sing,

And the toad cut out the pigeon wing.

(Nonsense rhyme.)

*ash potato*

Irish potato.

*Ash Wednesday*

The first Wednesday in Lent. The name came from an ancient ceremony. Ashes were placed on the head of persons by the priest or priests with the accompanying words — “Remember, man, thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return.”

*Ask* me no questions, I'll tell you no lies,  
Give me no peaches, I'll bake you no pies.

What is not worth *asking* for is not worth having.

*asleep*

Indolent, lazy.

A temporarily numbed condition of one's arm or leg and sometimes toe due to hindered blood circulation. “I lay on my arm last night and woke up this morning with it asleep and, man, did I evermore have a time getting the feeling back.”

*asleep at the switch*

Irresponsible, absent-minded.

*“Asleep in Jesus”*

This hymn brought comfort at many a funeral, and our male quartet could render it with especially good barbershop harmony effect. It brought tears of sympathy not only from the relatives and friends of the deceased but sometimes from even us, the singers.

“Asleep in Jesus! peaceful rest,  
Whose waking is supremely blest.  
No fear, no woe, shall dim that hour  
That manifests the Saviour's power.”

*as long as*

Inasmuch as. “As long as you say so, I will do it.”

*aspen*

Often called more descriptively “quaking aspen.”

*ass*

Nerve, bravado. “It took a lot of ass to climb that church steeple and paint it.”

A stupid person. “He that makes himself an ass must expect to wear the bridle.”

Every *ass* loves to hear his own bray.

*ass around*

To philander, waste time, flirt, be busy doing nothing.

*ass backwards*

Completely the wrong way, in reverse, same as the gentler bassackwards.

*ass ears*

A common weed.

*ass hole*

Anus, rectum.

*ass kisser*

Sycophant.

*ass-kissing snake*

A lowdown person.

*ass over one's elbow (shoulder)*

To get in too big a hurry, to cross a bridge before one comes to it. Also to be angry, excited.

*kiss my ass*

A derogatory and blackguarding phrase. Pantomime without words is often used with the same meaning, such as putting one's thumb to one's nose and wiggling the extended fingers or turning one's rump toward a person and slapping it with the palm of the hand.

*piece of ass*

To have sexual intercourse with a woman.

*silly ass*

Foolish, irresponsible person.

*Asses* die and wolves bury them.

*assy*

Horsey, excessive and free behavior, bossy, usually refers to a woman.

*ast, asted*

Asked.

*aster*

There are many species of this wild weed or flower. The pastures and wastelands and roadsides are beautified in autumn by its profusion of white, pink, lavender and purple bloomings. For all its beauty it still awaits the praise of a single Valley poet.

*asthma weed*

See "Jimson weed."

*astraddle*

Astride. "That woman ought to be ashamed of herself the way she rides her horse astraddle and her dress up to her thighs."

*astral body*

A term used in theosophy or occultism meaning a super-sensible substance, an ethereal counterpart or replica of the physical body. This astral entity is most active when the gross body sleeps. At that time it can communicate with other astral bodies and with other beings living or dead. I have constantly been astonished at the number of people I meet who believe in this superstition. But then I am reminded of the old Hindu proverb which in paraphrase says, "There's nothing man can believe that he won't believe."

*"As We Go Round the Mulberry Bush"*

A singing game, popular among smaller children. A ring was formed and the children, holding hands, at first marched around singing—

"As we go round the mulberry bush, the mulberry bush,  
the mulberry bush,  
So early in the morning."

Then they continued—

"This is the way we wash our clothes, wash our clothes,  
wash our clothes,"

And they pantomimed "the washing" and so on through the prim pantomime of

"This is the way we go to church, go to church, go to church,  
So early in the morning."

*atall*

At all.

*at death's door*

Critically ill.

*at loose ends*

Disorganized, lacking in any interest.

*A to izzard*

From first to last, the complete story, all the way through.

*atom*

A tiny bit, a grain, an iota. "That Earsie Brown ain't got an atom of sense."

*atonement*

The redeeming effect of Christ's incarnation, sufferings and death, as believed in by the faithful. It also means a reconciliation between God and man, especially through Christ. In fact, the whole protestant world believes that this atonement can only be effective through Christ. The early missionaries in the Valley had a hard time explaining to the benighted Indians how it was that the Father God, Great Spirit, could bring sinful mankind closer to him by having it commit more sin in the killing of his gentle and innocent Son Jesus. However, the Indians gave in here and there to the teaching but with no particular profit as I could learn, certainly no economic profit.

*atowards*

Towards.

*attaboy (attagal)*

A term of encouragement, meaning "go to it, give it all you've got," etc.

*atter*

After.

*afternoon*

Afternoon.

*atter while*

After a while.

*"At the Cross"*

Another consoling hymn that says—

"Alas and did my Savior bleed  
And did my sovereign die.  
Would he devote that sacred head  
For such a worm as I."

And as I raised my childish voice along with others in the church, I often thought to myself, "I don't feel like any worm." The refrain or chorus was most singable, after the dolorous verses preceding it—

"At the cross, at the cross  
Where I first saw the light  
And the burden of my heart  
Rolled away (rolled away).  
It was there by faith  
I received my sight,  
And now I am happy all the day."

My brother Hugh and I often while chopping cotton or doing other

rhythmic farm work would sing our parody on this chorus—

“At the bar, at the bar,  
     Where I smoked my first cigar  
 And the money in my pocket  
     Rolled away (rolled away)—  
 It was there by chance  
     That I tore my Sunday pants  
 And now I have to wear them  
     Every day (every day).”

*at the end of one's tether*

At the end of one's resources.

bore with a big *auger*

To talk big, act proud and mighty without sufficient reason, pretentious and egotistical.

*auger-eyed*

Sharp-eyed, boring-eyed.

a cold day in *August*

A rare occasion, much the same as never. “It'll be a cold day in August before he gets a brownie out of me to save the heathen.”

“*Auld Lang Syne*”

A favorite old Scotch song, sung tearfully at the new year.

“*Aunt Dinah's Dead*”

See “My Mamma Sent Me.”

*auntie*

An affectionate term for an old Negro woman, a general form of address to such in the old South.

*Aunt Jemima's plaster*

A popular plaster among us in the old days, good for all sorts of aches and pains. We children used to sing a song, and Mother sang it with us, about this mighty plaster, a song sent out as part of the manufacturer's advertisement—

“Aunt Jemima she was old,  
     But very kind and clever,  
 She had a notion of her own,  
     That she would marry never.  
 She said that she would live in peace,  
     And none should be her master.  
 She made her living day by day,

In selling of a plaster.”

Chorus:

“Sheepskin and beeswax  
Made this mighty plaster,  
The more you tried to get it off,  
The more it stuck the faster.”

And it went on through many stanzas telling how Aunt Jemima’s sister was stopped from growing into a giantess by having a plaster put on her feet, how a thief was caught by Aunt Jemima’s setting one of her plasters as a trap for him and his getting stuck in it, and how tomcats, dogs, sweethearts, wives and lovers were kept from wandering by the use of these wonderful plasters. We would sing the final stanza more dolorously as we chopped or picked cotton in the fields—

“Aunt Jemima’s dead and gone,  
I hate to tell the story,  
They put a plaster on her back  
And drawed her up to glory.  
Sheepskin and beeswax,” etc.

*auto poker*

A children’s game of identifying automobiles — also cows, sheep or horses — as one rides along. What fun our children used to have playing this game.

*average*

Medium, used in health inquiries mostly. “How’re your folks, John?” “Just average, just average, Luke.” Sometimes the reply is and was, “Well as common,” or “Not so good,” or “Just middling.”

*Averasboro, Battle of*

The Battle of Averasboro in the Valley was one of those tragic wasteful actions which often take place in wars after the main quarrel has been settled and no effect on the solution can accrue from the fight, only the senseless death of a number of combatants made more senseless by its uselessness. And, of course, this applies if one wants to be sensible and generous-hearted to all fratricidal brutalities among men. But often and often in the muck and misery of happening a bright flower or a luminous happening will take place, as if to say that no matter how men work their smothering they also strive to let a little light still shine.

So it was in the Battle of Averasboro, according to my good and long-time friend, Dr. John A. McKay. See “immaculate conception.”

*awful*

Very. “There were an awful lot of people at the funeral.”



as *awkward* as a cow

as *awkward* as an elephant

as *awkward* as an ox

*awkward squad*

New recruits or neophytes, especially in the military service.

*ax*

Ask.

*axle grease*

A lubricant for wagon wheels, often applied to sores, wounds, even piles.  
Also a reference to butter.

*ax to grind*

Some pet cause or project, a special interest. "No wonder you're for Sam Ervin, you've got an ax to grind in that matter."

*azalea*

A very popular shrub, and becoming more popular as the years go by. I would guess that at least half the homes in the Valley now have this beautiful plant, both white and pink, somewhere on their premises. Many azalea gardens have become showplaces, for instance, those at Wilmington or at Orton Plantation nearby. Azalea festivals also are becoming popular. We children used to go into the woods in the late springtime and gather the sticky sweet-smelling flowers of the wild azalea by the armful and bring them home to decorate the house. Also known as wild honeysuckle or swamp pink.

# B

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*Baa baa black sheep*, have you any wool?  
Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full.  
One for my master and one for my dame  
And one for the little boy that lives in the lane.  
(A nursery rhyme.)

Also there is another song which runs as follows:

*Baa baa black sheep*,  
Where's your little lamb?  
Way down yonder in the valley,  
Buzzards and the butterflies  
Picking out its eyes—  
Poor little thing crying “mammy.”

## *Baal*

A pagan divinity often referred to in the Bible. In Christian religious folklore it is identified by the local preachers with the spirit of evil and oftentimes with the devil himself.

## *babble*

To blab, to gossip. “She’ll babble it all over the neighborhood.”

## *babe*

An intimate term for a young woman, a lover. “How are you, babe?”

Out of the mouths of *babes* and sucklings,  
Out of the mouths of babes.  
Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent  
And revealed them unto babes.

## *babes in the woods*

Innocent, inexperienced or gullible people.

*babies*

We were told that more babies are born in a country during a war and the majority of them are male babies — as if mother nature had prescience and was replenishing the ranks of the dead.

*babies-in-the-eyes*

The mirrored reflection in one's lover's eyes. A game often played by sweethearts, face to face. Often, too, a little arm child is told to look into its mother's eyes to see its own reflection.

*baby*

A toy. "Give that child his baby and he'll quit crying."

We children were told that the new baby was found in a stump or an old woman brought it in her apron.

If a pregnant woman carries her *baby* high in her body, it's a girl, low it's a boy.

If a *baby* smiles in its sleep, the angels are talking to it — or it is talking to the angels.

Letting a *baby* stand up when it is too young will cause it to be bowlegged, or so it was believed.

*baby born*

"A baby born with two curls on his head  
In two continents will break bread."

The old granny that helped bring Mr. Mac into the world said this about him and his baby curls. But she was sadly mistaken — so far. She also prophesied a big family for him from the number of puckers in his blazing forehead. She missed that completely and no question about it. He's a childless widower and getting old.

*baby cradle*

A figure woven by threads or strings from one's fingers.

*baby hives*

Mr. Mac, my old miller friend, said they used to cure baby hives in the Cape Fear Valley by washing between the little thing's shoulders with warm water and soap. Then they'd make three small slits in the shoulder flesh with a razor. After that they'd warm up a cow's horn and put the large end over the slit in the skin and with beeswax close up the small end. The horn would stay on until it had drawn out a tablespoon of blood. Then it would fall off. "It was that blood that caused the hives. You could see it all dark," he said. "Weren't that a way to treat a baby! They've got a different fad these days. On any pretext whatsoever they tear and cut the poor helpless

thing's tonsils out. Later they'll have another custom like pulling off toenails or slitting ears to take the 'poison' out maybe. If they get the notion, it's scientific. Still, doctors have to live like anybody else," he said.

*baby-kisser*

A politician running for office.

*"Babylon Is Fallen"*

A stern and monitoring hymn widely sung in the Valley during the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century. It was one of the choice pieces in "Singing" Billy Walker's old book *The Christian Harmony*.

"Hail the day so long expected.  
Hail the year of full release!  
Zion's walls are now erected  
And her watchmen publish peace.  
  
"Thro' our Shiloh's wide dominion  
Hear the trumpet loudly roar—  
Babylon is fallen, is fallen.  
Babylon is fallen to rise no more."

*baby's breath*

A flower.

*baby-snatcher*, also *baby stealer*

Usually refers to an older man who marries a girl very much younger than himself. Same as cradle-snatcher.

Don't leave a cat in a sleeping *baby's room*. It might suck the child's breath away and kill it.

*baby stretches*

The habit a little one has of stretching its arms above its head and yawning.

Mr. Mac said the way to cure a baby of the stretches, according to an old folk belief, was to put a horse collar around him for a few hours. "Chavis McKiver's mammy," he said, "kept him sitting in a horse collar off and on till he was ten years old. But she never cured him. In later years when he was grown and driving his frisky mare across the Cape Fear River Bridge at Fayetteville, a spell of the stretches came on him. He reached out his arms sudden and high and his little mare jumped through the railing. Both man and mare fell to the riverbed below and were badly hurt. Chavis recovered, but the mare had to be shot. Chavis had no more stretches."

*baby trough*

A primitive wooden cradle made usually from a hollow gum log.

A baby crib.

***bachelor's buttons***

A flower. Bachelors were said to carry these flowers in their back pockets for love charms to win their sweethearts.

***back***

To address a letter. "Back that letter for me."

To lay back, to put back. "That Stewart boy can back his ears like a mule."

The most difficult part, the crest. "Now that March has come the back of winter is broken."

The *back* is shaped to the burden.

***backache root***

Same as blazing star.

***back a ways***

Somewhere in the past, some distance back.

***back band***

That part of the harness that goes over the back of the animal to hold up the shafts or the trace chains for plowing.

***back bar***

The iron bar in a chimney on which pots were hung for cooking.

***backbite***

To derogate, to berate, to speak of enviously, to abuse someone behind his back.

***backbone***

Strength, character, stamina. "That fellow's got plenty of backbone."

***back door trots***

Diarrhea, same as Joe-trots.

***back down***

To give in, to recant, to yield.

***'backer***

Tobacco.

***backfire***

An unexpected action or response opposite of what was intended.

***back hand***

To strike with the back of the hand. Also a sarcastic retort.

*backhouse*

Privy.

*backhouse blues*

The melancholies.

*backjaw*

Sassy talk. "Now look here, woman, don't give me any of your backjaw or I'll slap you from here to kingdom come."

*backlog*

A large log usually put in the back of the fireplace to last a long time and give out heat for quite a while. It also means "savings" or something in reserve as, "He's got a backlog of money saved up for a rainy day."

*back number*

Out of style, an old person, a failure.

*back out*

To renege, to break an agreement.

*back pedal*

To recant, to deny, to put on brakes.

*back-scratcher*

A sycophant, a flatterer. "Now that he's running for office he's the busiest back-scratcher you ever saw."

*take a back seat*

To be modest or retiring, assume second or third place instead of first place.

*backseat driver*

Just that — one who is always giving directions from the backseat, a meddler.

*backset*

A setback, ill luck.

*backside*

The rear, buttocks.

*back-slapper*

An over-offensive person, same as a sycophant. Also a hail-and-well-met fellow, a sort of over-optimistic Babbitt.

*back-step*

An error. Also to backslide, fall from grace.

*backstrap*

That part of the harness which goes around the rear of the team and fastens

to the shafts or to the traces to keep the wagon or carriage from rolling against the team in going downhill.

***back talk***

Sass, disrespect, same as backjaw.

***back teeth a-floating***

A desperate need to urinate.

***back to the wall***

A precarious position, in hard financial straits. "Now that the stock market's gone down, Mark's got his back to the wall."

***back up***

To withdraw.

***backward***

Afflicted, mentally retarded. "Poor Mrs. Matthews, she's got that backward boy and that hinders her a heap."

Shy.

***back water***

To back away, to yield. Also to repent, to give in and change one's attitude.

***back-water***

The water behind a mill dam which is usually still and backed up for use in grinding meal, corn or wheat. "No, I can't grind today because I ain't got no back-water."

***bacon meat***

Bacon.

as *bad* as marrying the devil's daughter and living with the old folks.

There's so much *bad* in the best of us  
That it doesn't behoove any of us  
To talk about the rest of us.

***bad actor***

A rough character, even a dangerous person.

***bad blood***

Enmity, hate. "No wonder Ed Lucas shot Jed Tart, for there's been bad blood between 'em for a long time."

Also hereditary tendency toward disease. "Bad blood runs in the family."

***bad cess***

Bad luck. Often used as an imprecation.

*badder*

Worse. "Rorie's a badder fellow than Dan McCloud and always has been."

*bad egg*

An unreliable person, a scoundrel, a faulty thing.

*bad eye*

The evil eye.

*bad fix*

A bad situation, injured or very sick. "Dr. Oppenheimer has got cancer of the throat and is in a bad fix from all that cigarette chain-smoking."

*bad lot*

Worthless, applied either to things or persons.

It is *bad luck* to drop a dish.

It is *bad luck* to help dig a grave for a relative.

It is *bad luck* to kill a buzzard.

It is *bad luck* to kill a lizard.

If I'm not *badly mistaken*

A much-used intro to a statement, meaning I am sure.

*Bad Man*

The devil. "If you children don't try to do better than you're doing, the old Bad Man is going to get you, sure as shootin'."

*bad medicine*

Bad news, bad influence, punishment. "That woman is bad medicine for him."

*bad-mouth*

To speak evil of one, to deride, downgrade.

*bad name*

Ill-repute. "Give a dog a bad name and you just as well shoot him."

*bad nigger*

A Negro who refused "to keep his place," that is, remain subservient to the white man, especially the Southern white man.

*bad-off*

To be very sick or in financial difficulty.

*bad penny*

An unreliable person, one with potential for trouble, often referred to as



a "black sheep."

### *bad place*

Hell, torment, "the br'iling pit" as the fanatical hedge preachers call it, the place where the orthodox and hardshell Christians believe sinners and unbaptized children and babies go when they die.

How often as a frightened little urchin I have sat in the old Pleasant Union hard-benched church and shivered under anathemas pouring from the blazing pulpit where the man of God stood and shouted forth his warnings and his condemnations. The only way to escape this awful hereafter place, according to these preachers, is to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified," and to lead Christian and godly lives. The belief is current in the Valley, as elsewhere, that anyone who has not repented of his sins, taken Christ as his personal Savior and turned his steps to walk in the straight and narrow path, will burn in everlasting fire after death, a fire seven times hotter than any fire that can be or ever has been kindled on earth, including bolts of sizzling lightning. When one of these believers is asked what will happen in the hereafter to all the millions and even billions of people who have lived and died and never heard of Christ and never had any chance to, the answer comes smugly enough from the deacon in Little Bethel Church saying, "It's just too bad for them, there's no help for it, they've got to suffer forevermore in the bad place."

You go on with your unregenerate but concerned inquiry. "But, Deacon John, surely you can't believe that all the millions of tiny babies, say, the innocent ones, the babies born and then immediately dead — and grown people, too, including the Orientals, the Hindus, the Mohammedans, the Chinese, the Japanese, Africans, Hottentots, Bantus, Eskimos and who not — all these who have never heard of Jesus and could not — all these must burn in this awful fire?"

"Too bad for them," comes the stern and rock-hard reply again, "just too bad, but that's the way it is."

"How do you know that's the way it is?" the inquirer calls out half-angrily.

"Why, it's in the Bible, and don't you believe the Bible? It says again and again, 'Except ye repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, ye shall all likewise perish.' Read Luke, John too, and the other gospels. Yessiree-bob, it's as plain as the nose on your face. Don't you believe the holy word, I say."

The answer from the lost one is, "No, I don't, not that sort of unholy word. Nor do I believe in such a God who would dispense this kind of insane and brutal judgment. No!"

And again the stern reply, "That's just too bad for you, too. I see where you're headed when you die. I'll pray for you, yes, I will, but I misdoubt

it will do any good. Repent now before it's too late."

And to keep the deacon from kneeling and beginning his prayer for him right there, the non-believer changes the subject to the pennant race between the Orioles and the Dodgers baseball clubs. Like the lost one, the deacon loves baseball, and so they have a good cheerful talk after all and shake hands friendly-wise when they part.

*bad row of stumps*

A difficult situation, difficult problems ahead.

*in a bad way*

In a difficult situation, near bankruptcy or in ill health.

*Bad weather* usually comes with the autumn equinox, September 22 or 23.

*Bad winters* come every seven years.

*go to the bad*

To be ruined, depraved, degenerated.

*looks bad*

Suspected of wrong-doing, in ill-health. "There's a shortage in John's account and it looks bad for him."

*bag*

An elderly woman, usually a prostitute.

It is hard for an empty *bag* to stand upright.

*bagabond*

Vagabond.

*baggage*

A trollop, a bad woman.

*baggage smasher*

A fellow who handles baggage or freight.

*bag of bones*

A skinny person.

*bag of tricks*

Devious devices or sells.

*bag of wind (a windbag)*

A loud, loquacious braggart.

*bag of worms*

An intricate problem, a dilemma.

***bagpipe***

A Scottish wind instrument once loudly played in the Valley, for instance in leading both Tory and Patriot troops to the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge.

***bags under the eyes***

Puffy protuberances under the eyes, often suggestive of heart trouble, say the doctors. Also suggest sleepless night carousing.

***Bahama grass***

See "wire grass."

***bailiwick***

A politician's district, a person's neighborhood or "stomping ground."

***bait***

A full meal, a stuffed stomach. "That boy et a bait of chitlins."

The *bait* hides the hook.

After putting *bait* on your fishhook, spit on it for good luck.

Be not a *baker* if your head be of butter.

***baker's dozen***

Thirteen.

***balance***

The others, the remainder. "Where are the balance of the folks?"

***balance all***

A call and movement in a square dance in which one executes a few steps before swinging his partner.

as *bald* as a billiard ball

as *bald* as a doorknob

as *bald* as an eagle

as *bald* as an onion

***balderdash***

Useless talk or argument, rubbish.

***bald-faced***

Unashamed, obvious. "He told me a bald-faced lie, that's what he did."

***bald-faced horse***

A horse with a white face.

Why is a man's *bald head* like unto heaven, son?  
Because there's no parting there.

(Riddle.)

*bald statement*

A brash statement.

*balk*

A narrow unploughed strip in the middle of two rows, or the amount set for a plough to plough off in ploughing a field around and around.

as *balky* as a horse

*ball*

A happy experience or happening. "I had a ball pitching that game."

Berry. "I had a good holly tree in front of my house full of balls, and once nigh to Christmastime somebody came in the dead of night and dug it up."

*ball-and-chain*

A heavy weight. In the old days the dangerous convicts, and often some who weren't dangerous, had to wear a ball-and-chain as they went out to work on the roads or help build railroads, or were hired out to dig canals for certain landowners. Many a pitiful story can be told about those who wore the ball-and-chain. This kind of punishment has passed away. Ball-and-chain is also used jocularly for a close clinging husband or wife.

*balled up*

Tangled up, confused, overwhelmed with work. "I'm so balled up these days I hardly know where to turn."

*ball game*

Business, plans. "They found him cheating, and there went his ball game."

*ballocks*

Testicles.

*ball of fire*

A very energetic person, a hustler.

*balls*

Testicles. Also used in an exclamation, "Balls to you" or "Balls!"

*ball the jack*

To move fast. One of my earliest remembrances of Wesley Armstrong, a Negro hired man on our farm, was his playing the mouth organ and imitating the train. And when he came to the part where the locomotive was balling the jack, we children would hop up and down in shivers of delight.

***bally-hack***

To cut and to tear wastefully, mess up.

***balm in Gilead***

A Bible phrase which is often used by preachers and others to tell of the healing we on earth who suffer so in this vale of tears will receive in the hereafter. This balm came from the Gilead region of ancient Palestine.

***balmy***

Lightheaded, foolish.

***Baltimore meat***

Cheap, huge slabs of sidemeat, once very popular, especially among Negroes in the Valley.

***bamboozle***

To hoax, to deceive. "He was the finest looking fellow you ever saw and all the time he was bamboozling me to a fare-ye-well."

***band dog***

A dangerous dog. One that has to be tied up, banded up.

***bang about***

To travel about carelessly. "You can bang about and get all kinds of reports as to the world going to the dogs." Also to treat roughly.

***bang-up***

Fine, first-rate, good. "He did a bang-up job on that barbecue."

***bank***

A cloud. "A dark bank in the west presages rain."

***bank on***

Depend on, count on. "You'd better not bank on that woman since she took to smoking them cigarettes."

***bantam***

An active, fiery person. "He was a little bantam all right, but he carried the difference in his pocket in the shape of a switchblade knife."

***bantlin***

Same as bantam, an undersized person.

***baptism***

The custom of either immersing or sprinkling a newly converted sinner. It is a common belief in the churches that children or babies that have not been baptized must go direct to hell when they die. The custom of baptism is to immerse one in a baptismal font or a lake or millpond, or to sprinkle on

the head water from a baptismal font as the Methodists do — the Baptists prefer immersion — those sinners who have repented or those children who are being christened.

### *baptizing*

A ritual use of water, either immersion or sprinkling, to symbolize purifying the converted sinners and admitting them to the Christian fellowship.

In the neighborhood where I was reared, the main baptizing place was the Reuben Matthews millpond. I'll never forget the day when I as a boy was baptized. I was so self-conscious that I even sweated while the preacher was leading me and a line of others into the water. I was sure that everybody was looking at me and only me. It was all a strange custom and, as young as I was, I wondered about it. Not many years later, to show how I backslid, I went to one of the baptizings at the same millpond, and two or three other teenage boys and I climbed up in the top loft of the millhouse and peered discreetly out of the open door there and watched the proceedings below. At many a baptizing before I had noticed how the deacons and the men standing on the bank watched the young women be led slowly into the water as they held the hand of the preacher or the person in front and with the free hand constantly pushed down their skirts to keep from revealing too much. And how sometimes when they were dipped under to the words, "Sister Sarah Matthews, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost," down under they'd go and often come up squealing and sputtering. Well, one day, as I say, we boys were hid upstairs with our beanshooters. We had BB shot for our ammunition and, when the girls were standing out in the water with their skintight clothes revealing much of their anatomy, which was the more keenly watched by the male members of the congregation along the bank, we fellows would let fly silently with our beanshooters and sting these girls with our invisible shot. When one girl would squeal and jump, we would duck behind the level of the door and hide, and the persecuted ones would look around to see from whence this biting and pinching came. We remained uncaught and all of this discomfort was attributed to the dog-flies which were usually plentiful in those hot days of August.

### *"Barbara Allen"*

The famous and perhaps most beloved of all tragic love ballads. There are many, many versions. Lynn Riggs, the playwright, used to visit us with his guitar, and always we would call for his "Barb'ry Allen." We would sit and gulp back our tears as the sad tale was sung, telling of Willie's futile love that killed him and of Barbara's death to follow. (Lynn Riggs was author of many plays including "Green Grow the Lilacs" from which the Richard Rodgers-Oscar Hammerstein musical "Oklahoma" was made.)

"Sweet Willie was buried in one grave  
 And Barbara in another.  
 A rose bush sprung from Willie's grave  
 And from Barbara's a briar.  
 "They grew and grew to the tall church door  
 Til they could not grow any higher.  
 They linked and lived in a true love's knot,  
 The rose wrapped 'round the briar."

### *barbecue*

A popular roasted pork dish, cooked with skill and patience. A dressed whole split pig is laid on poles or iron bars across an open pit in which a fire of hickory wood has been built and burned down to coals. During the some twelve hours of slow cooking these coals are replenished from time to time and the important sauce, composed principally of vinegar and pepper, is brushed over the pig at intervals, even as the pig itself must be turned to insure proper and even cooking. When the meat is thoroughly cooked and seasoned and allowed to cool, it is sliced and minced, which we prefer in the Valley, and served, usually with cole slaw and cornbread. Rocky Mount, North Carolina, used to be a sort of barbecue capital.

The word "barbecue" now often stands for a picnic or social gathering — sometimes called too "a pig-pickin' " — for always barbecue is the chief dish on such occasions.

Another use of the word referred to the horror of the electric chair. "Well, yesterday was Friday the thirteenth and it was an unlucky day for a lot of them fellows. Three of 'em were put in that chair and barbecued."

Malcolm Fowler, my historian friend from Lillington, saw one of the executions. He told me that as he was looking through the window to the death chamber at that big strong white man sitting in the chair, naked to the waist, "they shot the juice into him, that two thousand volts, and the hair on his chest caught fire and sizzled away." And Malcolm got sick at the stomach and hollered, from the observation room, "Let me out of here, let me out!" And they did.

### *Barbecue Church*

The famous old Presbyterian Church where Flora MacDonald worshipped and where in the old days Reverend John McLeod would preach two sermons — one in English and one in Gaelic — to satisfy his Scotch congregation.

According to John A. Oates, "The first grave within the 'Auld Kirkyard o' Barbecue' was said to be that of a stranger who appeared late one afternoon at the home of John Dobbin nearby. The stranger appeared seriously ill, unable to travel farther. Only one person, a woman, was at

home at the time. She told the man it would be impossible for him to receive accommodation there for the night. The stranger traveled on toward the church which had recently been built. The woman, becoming frightened, decided to go to the nearest neighbor's home to spend the night. She walked from Barbecue to the Gully McLean place, which is near the present post office of Overhills, a distance of eight miles or more, and remained there overnight. Next day, the body of the stranger was found prone upon the church steps and was buried hard by the church, the first grave at Barbecue." And from that time to this the door of the church is never locked.

*barefooted*

To be without means, penniless. "You tell me to be patient and, Lord God, I'm barefooted as a yard dog."

*barefooted horse*

An unshod horse.

*bare naked*

Nude, naked, also stark naked, mother naked.

*b'ar hog*

Boar.

*bark*

To skin, to hurt. "Golly, I barked my shin against that snag."

To cough. "Hey, boy, why you barking so?"

He's all *bark* and no bite.

His *bark* is worse than his bite.

*bark at the moon*

To clamor or argue uselessly. Also to attempt the impossible.

*barking dogs*

Aching feet. "I've already walked five miles and I've got to rest my barking dogs."

*barking iron*

An instrument in the old days used for removing bark from red oak logs or other trees whose bark was suitable for tanning hides or for medical uses.

*bark up the wrong tree*

To be mistaken, to act foolishly.



*barley*

A cereal grain much planted in the old days. It pretty much disappeared in the latter part of the nineties but it is now beginning to come back into favor.

*barley corn*

Usually referred to as John Barley Corn. Robert Burns' poem "John Barley Corn" used to be well known in the Valley. Phil McNeill could recite it beautifully when drunk.

"Then let us toast John Barley Corn  
Each man a glass in hand.  
And may his great posterity  
Ne'er fail in old Scotland."

*barlow knife*

A very popular pocket knife in the old days. This knife could be bought from Sears and Roebuck for twenty-five cents. It still can be bought around in hardware stores here and there. The last one I got I bought in Canyon, Texas, and it cost me \$1.25. The barlow knife is a special knife to me, and it is special to at least one other person in the Valley I can tell you about.

When I was a little boy, I had a Negro playmate named Rassie McLeod. His father was a tenant on my father's farm — the only tenant we had, and the family lived in an old shack, for we were all very poor. Rassie was the same age as I was and he was wondrously smart. He knew all kinds of woods lore and little shortcuts in how to get things done. He taught me how to chew tobacco, how to spit through my teeth, how to shoot dogwood berries out of one nostril while holding a finger or thumb against the other — shoot them out sometimes with the speed of a little popgun — and he finally taught me how to swim. In those faraway golden days we progued the woods many an hour when we were not busy in the cotton patch. And we were wont to make little waterwheels and see them turn gaily in the swift flowing tiny branch when the rains came. And we would make small pinebark boats, with an upright little mast and dry oak leaf for a sail, and watch them skid and turn and usually sink in the turmoiling stream. His prized working utensil was an old barlow knife which he had picked up somewhere.

Typhoid fever used to be man's raging enemy — along with tuberculosis — up and down the Cape Fear River Valley. Rassie's family came down sick with it. The two older brothers, Preacher and Herbert, were stricken, and the parents, Will and Zelda, prayed unceasingly night and day for their recovery. Dr. Joe McKay was summoned by my father — Dr. Joe, as he was familiarly called, delivered all of us Green children — and he came over in his horse and buggy. He came several times more as the fever ran its course. My older half sister nursed the sick ones as best she could. I tried to help

her but was forbidden both by her and Dr. Joe to come near the sick folks.

Later she reported Rassie was stricken. I wanted to go to see him but she picked up a stick and ran me away from the front door of the shack.

A day or two later Rassie died. In spite of all remonstrance I went to see him and there he lay dead on the floor, his little stomach all swelled out like one of these balloons you buy at the circus. I helped my sister wash him and make him ready for the grave. She unrolled a nightshirt to put on him.

"It's one of yours," she said.

"It's all right, it's all right," I sobbed. "I want him to have it."

"And I reckon it's a fair swap," she said, "cause 'fore he died he said he wanted you to have his barlow knife." And reaching behind her, she picked it up from the chimney corner and handed it to me.

And all the while Herbert and Preacher, lying in their bed, were hasseling and whickering away in delirium with the sounds of two sucking pigs. And Will and Zelda were kneeling and bumping their heads against the floor, crying out to the old Moster to have mercy and save their boys. Dr. Joe came and surveyed the wrack and ruin. To me he looked about seven feet tall and powerful as God Almighty. He stood by the bed with one of his hands on Herbert, holding his big gold watch open. Then he snapped the lid of the watch to, and it sounded like the snap of a steel trap to me. His voice burst from him in rage.

"Why in the name of God a man will let his tenants live in such a mess as this I don't know!" he snarled. "Let 'em die, let 'em all die!" And he strode out of the old shack, climbed in his buggy and drove away.

Later my father and I made a coffin for Rassie and we took him up in the field and buried him. And I put some limp cotton in the coffin for his head to rest on.

Since that time I have carried a barlow knife in my pocket — in remembrance of my dead playmate of long ago.

My more recent neighbor, Dr. Amos Brown, said the barlow knife was special to him too. One day when we were talking about the eradication of typhoid fever and other things, I mentioned Rassie to him and he told me about his own knife. "I've got to go out to see a patient that thinks he's got heart trouble," he said, "and maybe you'd like to ride along with me and I'll tell you the story.

"Yes," he continued as we drove along in his old Ford, "John Dupree was on his last legs when I went out to see him — over there on Black River — or on his last back, you might say, as he was lying in bed too sick to move. When we were boys, John and I had a bad falling out about a barlow knife. I had ordered myself one from Sears and Roebuck or somewhere and I sure did love that knife. I showed it off at Little Bethel School and John saw it and wanted it. He asked me if he could feel it, and I handed it to him. Then he laughed, put it in his pocket and said he was going to keep it. I

begged and pleaded but nothing doing. He made me so mad that I went after him hot and heavy and we had a real fight. He was bigger than I was and he gave my body a terrible beating. So all the way home walking through the woods I kept crying. But I stopped before I got to the house, washed my face in the branch and went on, too proud to let any of my folks know what had happened.

“Naturally, after that I never liked John Dupree. He quit school, as I remember, at the end of the year, went off and hired out to help build the railroad that now runs from Dunn to Durham. He got in a fight over there and had a brush or two with the law. Then he left and went to Georgia and I went to Chapel Hill and then to medical college in Pennsylvania.

“What do you reckon! A few months ago a woman came to see me, and was I surprised! Purty, my goodness, and built up in front like one of these statues of Venus de Milo. She said she wanted me to come to see John. I found out then that he had come back from Georgia to the old homeplace. Over the years I had heard some talk now and then that he had been in trouble down in Georgia, had served some time in the penitentiary for shooting a man and so on. So, as I say, I was surprised to have this woman come to see me and to learn that John had come home — and I learned further that he had come home to die.

“ ‘Is he your husband?’ I asked her. And she waited a while and said that he wasn’t but she loved him just the same and she would do all she could for him in his last days.

“I went out to see him. He was in bad shape. He had cancer, cancer of the testicles, a kind of rare thing but he had it. As far gone as he was he recognized me and got hold of my hand with both of his cold trembling ones and said pleadingly, ‘Can you do something for me, Amos, can you? We used to be boys together, you know.’ I told him I would do the best I could and for him to rest and take it easy. I gave him a shot to ease his pain and then went outside and talked to the woman. Her name was Lydia. I gave her some pain pills to give John now and then and told her I didn’t think there was much we could do for him.

“ ‘There must be, there must be!’ and her voice was full of pleading. She surely loved that scoundrel and, though by this time the neighborhood was buzzing about what sort of woman she was, I felt like taking off my hat before her. And I did.

“Two or three days later I went out to see John again and he was gone. She had taken him up to Duke Hospital. Where she got the money, I don’t know. Maybe she got it the way some people snickered and talked about, but I am not judging her. When you see a woman that loves a man the way she loved John and tried to save him, all you can do is say Amen and bless her for it. Anyway she was always a perfect lady around me.

“They operated on him at Duke and she brought him home, and for

a while he seemed to mend. Then he went down hill sudden-like, like the sun sinking out of sight on a dark winter evening, as you might say.

"I went out to see him again and he was dead. She was sitting by the bed holding one of his shriveled hands in both of hers.

"Well, she told me how John had died during the night and died somewhat easier in his mind, and she told me why this easing had come to him.

" 'You know,' she said looking up at me with her big dark eyes, 'every day he would ask if what he'd had me order from Sears-Roebuck had come in the mail. It come yesterday. He said he wanted you to have it. You would understand because of what happened when you were two little boys way back there at Little Bethel Schoolhouse, he said. Then she got up and took a little package from the mantelpiece and handed it to me. I opened it and inside was a barlow knife.

" 'He said he wanted you to forgive him,' she said.

" 'Yes, I forgive him,' I said. And we crossed John's hands on his breast and pulled the sheet up over him.

"We got the neighbors and buried John two days later, and I was proud to stand by her side at the grave with the people looking on. After that she went away, back to Georgia, I reckon. I wrote there trying to find out about her. I was taken with her — I don't mind telling you. But not a word of her did I ever learn. Ah, a woman's love is a wonderful thing, ain't it. Well, here's where we stop."

And we drew up in front of a run-down farmhouse.

"And by the way," he said as we got out of the car, "like you I carry a barlow knife with me. But mine is the same one she gave me with her own hand. I've never lost it." And he clasped his britches pocket possessively and he went up the walk to the house.

### *barn door*

A big target, something too big to be missed. "Cross-eyed as he is, he couldn't hit a barn door with that old gun."

### *barning*

To put crops, especially tobacco, into the barn for curing. When the barning time comes on, it is a busy time indeed for the farmers. The ripened tobacco leaves are primed, that is, cropped from the stalk, tied in bundles, put on sticks, and hung in the barn and fires put under them. In the old days, wood was used in the furnaces. But in these later days oil burners are used.

*A barn well filled,*

*A land well tilled,*

*And a woman well willed*

*Are the greatest blessings under the sun.*

*barnyard chorus*

A group of people, a sort of rabble.

Also a popular children's game in the Valley. In a whisper the leader assigns to each player the name of the farm animal or bird he is to imitate. All are to grunt, moo, cackle, bray, etc. when the signal "Barnyard chorus!" is given. However, the leader has secretly instructed all but one, always a newcomer, to remain silent at the signal. So it is that only the voice of the unfortunate one is heard, much to his or her embarrassment. The trouble with this game is it can be played only once by the group and has to wait till another person ignorant of the game arrives.

*barrel*

To collect, as grain, for storage. "He barreled his potatoes."

To move or drive fast. "He went barrelling down the road and no wonder he had a wreck in that old car."

Scraping the bottom of the meal *barrel* makes mighty poor music.

*barrel house*

A wide open saloon.

*barrow*

A castrated boar.

*to set one's barrow down*

To quit on the job.

*bar-shear plough*

A wooden mould-board plough with strips of iron nailed on to the board to save it from wear. This was used in the early days.

*bash*

A loud gathering or garden party.

To smash, mash, or beat in. "You keep giving me that sass and I'll bash in your face, hosscake." It was told in my neighborhood how a strong man, one named Broadhuss (Broadhurst), bashed in the side of his house with some hoghead bones once when he got irritated with his wife's picayunish cooking. See "Broadhuss."

*bassackwards, bassack'ards*

Contrariwise, in reverse direction. "It's as plain as the nose on your face," said Mr. Mac, "that the way we're going out to win Southeast Asia by military force is bassackwards."

Using the word in prim company, one should be sure of his pronunciation. In "The Common Glory," an outdoor drama of mine, there

is a speech which included the word. One night the actor — and he was a good one — said “assbackwards” by mistake and, believe it or not, it nearly broke up the performance. It was something to see and hear — the embarrassed tittering and shuffling of the audience. The actor felt self-humiliated. He quit acting and became a preacher.

*bastard*

Illegitimate. A term of derogation, used often as an expletive. “You bastard!”

*bat*

To blink. “That white man hit C.C. Spaulding right in the face when he come up to the fountain asking for a co’cola, and Spaulding never batted an eye, just looked at him all sad and sick-like.”

A cylinder of cotton made on hand cards and placed between two layers of cloth for quilting.

An elderly, obnoxious woman.

A night prostitute.

A spree. “He went on a bat so long that the heebie-jeebies got him. He thought he was in a barn-lot mired up in manure to his neck and a mule got after him and he couldn’t get out. When he started screaming, Bud and me went to him and held him on the bed. Later we had to take him up to the asylum in Raleigh to get him dried out.”

*not bat an eye*

To be courageous, able to endure. “He didn’t bat an eye when the judge sentenced him to death.”

*like a bat out of hell*

Quickly, in a headlong manner. “When he saw the Ku Klux there in the graveyard, he tore down the road like a bat out of hell.”

*batch*

To live alone as a bachelor.

A number, a group, a flock. A batch of children, a batch of chickens.

*bats in the belfry*

Crazy.

*batter bread*

Bread made of cornmeal, mixed with eggs and milk and cooked in a deep earthenware dish or tin pan. It is also called spoonbread.

*batting an eye*

Usually "without batting an eye," meaning instantly.

*battle axe*

A militant woman, or a huge, rawbony female. Also a popular brand of chewing tobacco.

*"The Battle Hymn of the Republic"*

The rousing Civil War song of the Union Army with marvelous lyrics by Julia Ward Howe. The tune is the old "John Brown's Body Is A-mouldering in the Grave."

*Battle of Bentonville*

One of the last battles of the Civil War and a bloody one, fought between the southern forces of General Joseph E. Johnston and the pursuing northern forces under General William Tecumseh Sherman on March 20-21, 1865, in Harnett County. Once more a waste of human life. Johnston lost more than 2,000 of his men and Sherman some 1,600. As a boy, I saw many an old soldier who had given away a leg or an arm in this battle and, strange to say, and not so strange, they all were proud of their sacrificial giving.

*Battle of Culloden*

The famous and bitter battle in 1746 between the British, led by the Duke of Cumberland, and the Scots, led by Prince Charles Edward, resulting in the defeat of the Scots. The Duke murdered the wounded Scots on the field after the battle and thus received the title, "the butcher." But even so, the Scots in the Valley named their county Cumberland after him.

As a boy I used to hear some reference now and then from an old Scotsman who had it from his grandfather or some relative as to the bravery or suffering of an ancestor in that battle. Its influence continued into the Revolutionary War and had something to do with the division of loyalties among the Valley Scots. See "Culloden."

*battle royal*

A loud quarrel, a hectic fight.

*battling stick*

A stick used to beat clothes while washing them.

*batty*

Crazy. "Mr. Holloway worried so much after the girl that jilted him that he finally went plumb batty, and they had to shut him up in Dix Hill."

*bawbee*

A trifle, anything of small value.

*bawl*

Squall, yell, cry.

*bawl out*

Scold, berate.

*bayberry*

A wax-producing shrub, also referred to as wax myrtle. The plant has aromatic leaves and hard nut-like berries coated with wax. Bayberry candles used to be popular, made by pouring the melted wax of the berries into wooden molds.

A *bayberry* candle burned to the socket

Brings luck to the house and money to the pocket.

*bay the moon*

Pursue an empty cause or act foolishly.

*baywindow*

A big belly.

*beak of the house*

The comb or ridge of the roof.

*the be-all to end-all*

The final goal, the complete authority.

*beam*

The hips, buttocks, rump. "She's a broad-beamed woman."

*bean*

The head. Also a dollar, as "I'm plumb hard up. I ain't got a bean in my pocket."

*to bean*

To hit a person on the head, especially with a pitched baseball.

*beanery*

A cheap eating house.

*beans*

A standby vegetable in most gardens. There are two main kinds — the string and the bush. We always planted the bush variety, though some of our neighbors preferred the other and put up stakes and a clever crossing or looping of strings for the plants to climb on. The good way of cooking these beans was with a hunk of hog jowl or side meat. According to the old belief, any vegetable whose fruit hangs down should be planted on Good Friday, hangman's day, beans especially.



*not worth beans*

No good, bankrupt.

*beanstalk*

An extremely tall, thin person. Same as slats.

*Bear* ye one another's burdens.

Every man shall *bear* his own burden.

*bear a hand*

To aid, to give assistance to.

*to have a bear by the tail*

To have a job too big to handle, and at the same time can't let go of it.

To have responsibility in a dangerous situation.

*bear cat*

A tough person, man or woman.

*bear grass*

See "yucca."

*beard the lion in his den*

To face the worst.

*beast with two backs*

A man and woman in sexual intercourse.

*beat*

Exhausted, whipped down.

To baffle. "That beats me."

You have to *beat* clay to make a pot.

*beat about the bush*

To be evasive, to hesitate, to prevaricate.

*beat down*

To persuade a lowering of prices, same as to *jew* down, to wear one down.

*beat his bird in the bushes*

To masturbate.

*beatingest*

The outdoingest, most outlandish, wildest. "He's the beatingest man I've ever seen."

*beat it*

A command to leave, to get away.

*beat of*

A special or unusual thing or person. "I've never seen the beat of that boy the way he acts."

*beats the Dutch*

Outlandish, a matter of surprise. "That beats the Dutch."

*beat the band*

To be in excess of, up to a surprising degree. "Lord, that man could yodel to beat the band." "It's raining to beat the band."

*beat the gums*

Idle talk, foolish palaver.

*beat the jews*

A reference to an act of cleverness or accomplishment.

Also a mild expletive.

*beat the lard out of*

A common parental threat of a spanking for unruly children. "You all stop that fighting or I'll come in there and beat the lard out o' you."

*beau catcher*

A little frilled curl ladies arranged near the ear for seductive effect.

*beaut*

A beautiful person or thing.

as *beautiful* as the dawn

as *beautiful* as the sunset

*"Beautiful Dreamer"*

One of Stephen Foster's greatest songs.

*Beauty* buys no beef.

*Beauty* is as beauty does.

*Beauty* is like a rainbow, full of promise but short lived.

*Beauty* is only skin deep.

*Beauty* never made the kettle boil.

*beauty sleep*

Early night sleep.

*Beauty's* only skin deep,  
 Ugly's in the bone,  
 Beauty soon will pass away,  
 Ugly hold her own.  
 (A proverb rhyme.)

A thing of *beauty* is a joy forever.

I've seen lots of *beauty* but never et a mess of it.

***Beaver***

A game.

***bed***

What has four legs, a head, a foot and can't walk and can't talk?  
 (Riddle.)

Four legs up, four legs down  
 Soft in the middle, and hard all around.  
 (Riddle.)

As you make your *bed* so you must lie.

***bedag***

A mild expletive.

***bed cord***

The rope used in cord beds crossed from railing to railing to hold the mattress.  
 "Listen, gal, my love is bed cord strong."

***bedful of bones***

An emaciated sick person.

***bedo and bedamn!***

A mild expletive.

***bed offer***

To tempt sexually, a woman offering herself to a man for sexual use.

***bed of roses***

Easy living.

***get out of bed on the wrong side***

To be irritable, bellicose.

**between you and me and the *bedpost***

Secretly.

***bed stick***

A bed slat. A short piece of plank used to hold up the springs or mattress.

*bed straw*

A fast growing creeper that will cover a garden plot in a few days if not gathered up. It is easily disposed of. Chewing it and swallowing the juice was supposed to be good for a nervous condition.

*bed tick*

A big bag, a sort of thing for holding the goose feathers for the bed.

*bee balm*

A member of the mint family. Sometimes called "Oswego tea." It grows luxuriantly in wet places and along stream banks. In the old days a tea made from it was good to help women over their "monthlies."

*bee bread*

Brown substance in the honeycomb.

*beech*

This lovely tree is most common in the center and upper reaches of the Valley and is a favorite for lovers to carve their initials on. There is a common belief that it, like the sweet gum, is never struck by lightning. The bark was often used for tanning when red oak bark was not available.

*beef*

To complain, to bellyache, to growl. "If that fellow can't quit beefing about his job, I'm going to fire him."

*beef up*

To increase, to strengthen.

*beefy*

Stout, heavy, over-fleshed.

*bee gum*

A hollow gum for keeping bees, usually from a black gum tree. Also, an old-timey container made by sawing off the length of a hollow tree and closing up one end of it for holding grain or other farm produce.

*bee-gum hat*

A tall hat with a cylindrical crown such as Lincoln wore in the Civil War on his visit to the front.

*bee in one's bonnet*

To have a special purpose or a secret scheme.

*beeline*

The straightest line between two points. "When his pappy called, little Willie made a beeline for home."

***Beelzebub***

The head man in hell as described in the Bible. The same as Satan, the Devil, the Bad Man, Old Black Boy, Old Nick, Belial, etc.

***bee-martin***

A bird especially good at driving off hawks or crows. When I was a boy, nearly every farm in the Valley had a pole raised with cross-arms above from which hung a number of gourds with little openings cut in them for the martins to nest. This custom is passing away. Recently in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Joe Jones brought me a number of gourds to put up, but I haven't seen one bee-martin yet.

***been had***

Seduced, tricked, cheated. "Yes," she said gleefully as she pulled up her drawers, "I've been had."

***been there***

Experienced, been around. "Boy, you needn't try to get around him, he's been there."

***Beersheba***

A place mentioned in the Bible, and usually spoken of in connection with Dan, meaning from A to Z or from here to yonder. The expression was "From Dan to Beersheba."

***bees***

A swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay,  
A swarm of bees in June is worth a silver spoon,  
A swarm of bees in July is not worth a fly.  
(Folk belief.)

***bee's knees***

Something excellent, same as the cat's whiskers. A clever action or a good play at cards, or a nice and happy situation.

***bee-tree***

In the old days hunters kept their eyes out to find bee-trees. These were trees, usually hollow black gums, in which bees had built, and sometimes when they were cut down a great deal of honey could be got. I remember one man in Cumberland County telling me that he had cut down a bee-tree once and had over two hundred pounds of honey from it.

***beezer***

The nose, the face.

***before you can bat an eye***

Very quickly, instantly.

*before you could say Jack Robinson*

Instantly.

*before you could say scat*

Also quick.

*B from bull's foot*

An expression of confusion, ignorance. "They were so drunk they didn't know B from bull's foot."

*Be* fruitful and multiply.

*beggar lice* (ticks)

A pestering plant to anyone walking in wastelands or grown-over fields in late August or September. These lice or ticks, their seeds, stick to your trousers or dress most tenaciously. "So do they distribute themselves in the land," said my friend Dr. Henry Totten at Chapel Hill. This caused me to ask if maybe they had a mind of their own and knew what they were doing. His answer was a shrug and half a nod. There is much to ponder here, of course, as everywhere, as to nature's doings, and I have done a lot of that as I walked among the weeds, the woods, the flowers and other growing things in the Valley — not only with a shrug and half nod, but with a humbling of the head. "Do these all," I ask myself, "have the power to think?" As Dr. Totten might — and my old philosopher friend Mr. Mac would say, "Could be." A tea made from boiling the seed was said to be an aid in easing the discomfort of women's menstrual periods. See "stick-tight."

*Beggars* must not be choosers.

*Beggars* breed,  
And rich men feed.

If wishes would bide,  
*Beggars* would ride.

If wishes were horses,  
*Beggars* might ride.

*beginning to show*

Signs of pregnancy. "Mis Mae's girl is beginning to show. Lord have mercy on her, and she ain't got husband one."

From small *beginnings* come great endings.

*begoudge*

To stab or pierce with a knife or sharp instrument. "He got so sick in his mind that one day he picked up a butcher knife and begoudged himself in the stomach."

*begredge*

Begrudge.

*Begun* is half done.

*behanged!*

A mild imprecation.

*behave*

To act politely. "Now you children behave."

*behind beyond*

Completely away, gone.

*behindhand*

The opposite of beforehand, indolent, procrastinating.

*go behind the barn*

Refers to answering the call of nature, to urinate or defecate.

*behind the eightball*

To be in an uncomfortable situation, or hemmed in.

*being*

Since. "Being you are ten, you ought to know better." "Being as how you're a woman, I'll help you get your car out of that ditch."

*bejeck and bejack*

To trifle with. Also, a mild imprecation.

*be-Jesus*

An exclamation, also an indefinite something. "This nuclear threat over the world scares the be-Jesus out of me!" says Lonnie Cofield.

*belam*

To lambast, to beat. "You orter seen him belam that old mule."

*belfry*

Head, brain. "He's got bats in his belfry," which means crazy ideas, loony thoughts.

*Believe* only half you hear.

*Believe I will.*

Same as "yes." "Will you have more soup, Mr. Barnes?" "Believe I will."

A man *believes* what he wishes to.

*beliked*

Loved.

A cracked *bell* can never be mended.

The higher the *bell*, the farther it sounds.

*a bell-clapper*

A loose tongued person. Retarded, loony.

*bell cow*

An old woman, a gossip, a scold.

*belled buzzard*

In Harnett County when I was a boy, a story was told how an old Negro caught a crippled buzzard and put a little bell around his neck. Then he let the buzzard loose. The buzzard was healed of his hurt and flew away, but he continued to haunt the neighborhood, and he could be heard flying through the air, the little bell tinkling as he soared and dipped. And it was told that when the old Negro was nearing death, this same buzzard came and sat on the roof of his house. Now and then he would shake himself, shivering, lift his wings and hop about to ring the bell the while. After the old man died, the buzzard flew away and was never seen again.

Stuffed *bellies* make empty skulls.

*bellowsed*

Wind-broken. "I ain't never liked Jim Harmon since he traded me that bellowsed horse."

*bell the cat*

To attempt something dangerous, risky.

*bellwether*

The leader, sometimes tinged with derision. "That Sadie Cutts is just an old bellwether."

*His eye was bigger than his belly.*

Said of one who overloads his plate with food, takes too much, or undertakes more than he can accomplish.

*bellyache*

To complain.

*bellyband*

The girth in harness or saddle paraphernalia.

*belly-buster*

A flat dive so that one's stomach hits the water first.

*belly button*

The navel.



***bellyful***

Enough, an excessive amount. "I've had a bellyful of that fellow."

***belly-shot***

Cattle, horses or mules, whose bellies are swollen and hang down low. Shrunk-gutted.

My *belly* thinks my throat's cut.

To be ravenously hungry.

***belly-wash***

Patent medicine. Most of the curative tablets and liquids advertised on present-day television can be so described.

Also a slang name for coffee.

***belong***

To deserve. "You belong to have your butt whipped for spittin' in that woman's face."

Should, ought. "If the bonds belong to be in the safety deposit box, then put 'em there."

***belt***

To chop a ring around a tree to make it die. Also to strike a blow at someone.

***belt out***

To sing loudly.

***belt-tightening***

Economical action, cutting down expenses.

***bench fice***

A dog with a long body and short legs.

***bender***

A spree, a wild drunk. "He went on a bender three weeks ago and ain't struck a lick of work since."

***bend the elbow***

Take a drink of liquor. "Yeh, he had too much bending of the elbow and the D.T.'s got him."

***benny***

An automobile. The term may come from the old Benjamin Franklin car.

***bent and determined***

"He was bent and determined to go to see that girl and he did."

*bent* but not broken

***Bermuda grass***

This grass was used widely as a purge when chewed. Even the dogs still chew it to make themselves vomit.

***berries***

The real thing, a special person or thing. "That Bryan girl is the berries."

***berry***

A jeer, same as raspberry.

***be-shame bush***

The sensitive plant. We boys were taught that if you touched its leaflets and said, "Be shame, be shame," the little petals would close up. We soon saw they would close to the touch with or without the words. We were also told that if it thundered, the petals would close in preparation for rain. I don't remember I ever checked this out.

***besides***

Except. "Everybody besides you three go out."

***beslobber***

To slobber, to slobber on.

***best***

To outdo, to get the better of.

The *best* comes first.

***best fellow* or *best girl***

A sweetheart.

***to put one's best foot forward***

To make a good impression.

The *best physicians* are Dr. Diet, Dr. Quiet and Dr. Merryman.

The *best way* to lose a friend is to lend him money.

***Bethel***

The name given to many a church in the Valley. I used to call the neighborhood in which I grew up "Little Bethel" and wrote many a story and play about the people who lived there. The word means "The house of God," "hallowed spot."

***Bethesda***

A name common in the Bible and also very popular as a name for churches in the Valley and elsewhere.

*better* a neighbor that is near than a brother that is far-off

*better* be alone than in ill company

*better* be poor than wicked

*better* be sure than sorry

*better* be wise by the misfortune of others than by your own

*better half*

One's husband or wife.

*better* have it than hear of it

*better* late than never

*better* one plough than two cradles

The *better* part of valor is discretion.

*better* something than nothing at all

*better* suffer wrong than do wrong

*better than*

More. "He'll take better than an hour at a meal every time."

the *better* the day, the better the deed

*better* to be happy than wise

*better* to bend than to break

*better* to be safe than sorry

*better* to be than seem. The North Carolina motto - "Esse quam videri."

*better* to die on your feet than to live on your knees

*better* to do well than to say well

*better* to go to heaven in rags than to hell in embroidery

*better* to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting

*better* to leap before you look than always to look and never leap

*better* to save a man from dying than to mourn for him when he is dead

*better* to smoke here than hereafter

*better* wear out shoes than sheets

*better* to wear out than to rust out

*Betty Boddie* bought some butter,  
But the butter Betty bought was bitter.  
Then she bought some better butter  
To make her bitter butter better.

When she bought her better butter,  
It made her batter better.  
Tip top tangle tongue  
Say this riddle I have sung.

(A tongue twister.)

*betty*

A name for various tools. "Hand me my betty from that box."

*between a rock and a hard place*

In tight circumstances, bankrupt, in a precarious position.

*between kin see and kain't see*

Between daylight and dark.

*between me and you and the gatepost*

Confidential, secret.

*between the devil and the deep blue sea*

In a bind, in a quandary, in a tough situation.

*between two fires*

In a tough situation.

*between whiles*

Between times.

*betwixt*

Between.

*betwixt and between*

Uncertain, not knowing what to do. "I'm all betwixt and between on this matter of capital punishment."

Also at odd moments, in one's spare time. "I'll work it in somehow — betwixt and between."

*bet your boots*

A phrase of emphasis, a mild expletive.

*bet your bottom dollar*

Another phrase of emphasis.

*bet your life*

Also a phrase of emphasis.

***Beulah land***

The land of heart's desire mentioned in the Bible and often sung about and preached about by members of the Christian faith as identical with the New Jerusalem in yonder world. The place the faithful shall go to when they are dead, there to play their harps, drink of the waters of life, and praise almighty God forevermore.

***Beware*** of a woman with honey in her mouth and a sting in her tail.

***Beware*** of the forepart of a woman, the hind part of a mule and all sides of a priest.

***beyond the beyond***

The absolute distance, far far away.

***beyond the shadow of a doubt***

Absolutely, without any question.

The *Bible* says

The quoted authority to confirm a truth, to silence all opposition.

***Bible thumper***

A preacher.

***biddy***

A child, young girl. Also a freshly hatched chicken.

***biff***

To hit, to strike with the fist, to buffet.

***big***

To make pregnant. "He went and bigged Joe Turner's gal. No wonder they're after him with a shotgun."

as ***big*** as a house

as ***big*** as an elephant

as ***big*** as life

***big as life and twice as natural***

In full presence.

big ass

A fat girl or boy, usually refers to a girl.

***big auger***

The boss. To bore with the big auger is to have great influence, also to show off.

*big bed*

Used in contrast with the trundle bed. "You can sleep in the big bed tonight."

*big blade*

The boss, a splurging man, usually living beyond his means.

*Big Boss*

Jehovah, God.

*big boy*

A man, a foreman, a boss.

*big bug*

Same as big gun, big one, big shot, big stuff, big wig. A notable person, a millionaire, a political boss.

*big butt*

A big posterior, buttocks.

*big daddy*

An affectionate term for a boss, leader, factory or union head who has a special care for those who work for him or serve him. Also an indulgent lover and sexually potent man.

*big dog*

Same as big bug.

*the big end of the horn*

To come out profitably. "Did you hear of Marshall Turlington in that real estate deal? Man, man, he come out at the big end of the horn on that, and I come out on the little end."

*big-foot*

A clumsy person.

no *bigger* than a minute

no *bigger* than a possum's peter

There's a family — Mr. & Mrs. Bigger and  
their little daughter. Of the three which  
is the bigger? (Riddle.)

Why, the daughter, of course, for she's a  
little *Bigger*.

*biggest*

The majority, the largest part. "I was there the biggest part of the night."

*biggity*

Proud, stuck up, insolent.

*big gun*

Same as big boss.

*big house*

The landlord's or boss's house, also the penitentiary.

*Big John*

A muscular stout man, any man of great physical size and strength. Also a semi-fictional character in Negro folklore in the Valley and elsewhere.

There are many tales told about the Negro Big John and his gluttony and laziness, and I have heard them from different sources. I copied down one Aunt Fanny McDade told me about the old rapscaillon. Aunt Fanny was a prideful Negress who owned her own home in Chapel Hill, at the corner of Cameron Avenue and Graham Street, and lived to be a hundred and four years old. She died in 1964. She used to say to her friends with a chuckle, "I come in with Lincoln but I didn't go out with him." She was for a long time a favorite with the university people and her recollections went far back to Mrs. Spencer, Presidents Battle, Winston and others and on up to recent days. I copied down many of the things she told me about Chapel Hill, and in one of my notebooks I wrote down her story of Big John.

"Yessuh, yessuh, Mr. Green," she said one day as she lifted her heavy sad iron off the lacy dress she was ironing for one of the university wives and peering over her steel rim spectacles at me, "put this in your pipe and smoke it. There are plenty of people in this world who holler Lord and follow devil. And they make a big squealing and little wool as this same old Satan said when he sheared his hogs. And Big John was like that, a hypocrite from way back, in the old days. Yessuh, he was a lazy good-for-nothing old scoundrel, that's what he was. And there was nothing he liked better than to lie up and snooze whilst his wife and children did all the hard work. And there in his bed he kept saying and pretending he was sicker'n he was and that he wouldn't be long for this world and soon would be flapping his wings at the pearly gates. And he had one speech which he kept calling out — 'Old Moster in Heaven, come and take me, take me whole soul and body, take me away to thy mansion in the skies.' And that's the kind of tune he kept a-going.

"The people passing along the road, the neighbors, could hear this old nigger lying up there in his feather bed a-praying and a-talking this good holy talk. And the folks brought him plenty of good things to eat, seeing as how he was so close to God, they thought. But it was all a blind. For that old devil wasn't any more interested in religion than a goat in a bass fiddle. As I said, it was just his excuse to laze and do nothing and eat the good things his wife and children worked out for him and the neighbors brought in.

“It may be easy to fool the niggers, Mr. Green, but you take it from me, you can’t fool the good white folks, not for long. They’ve got brains — even like you and the other ’fessors that teach in the university here. So it was that good old Moster Landlord, the white man, was on to old Big John. He could see through him. So he said to Big John’s wife one day, he said, ‘Liza’ — her name was Liza — ‘you and me’s got to do something ’bout him.’

“ ‘Yes sir, Marse Landlord,’ said Liza.

“So they put their heads together in a manner of speaking and made their plans.

“Now one day in the fall when the cotton was hanging white as snow in the field and needed picking mighty bad, old Big John was lying up in the bed there same as usual and putting out his prayers and hollers more than ever. You see he was slick, the worse the cotton needed picking, the louder was his holy talk. And he was sending forth his refrain. ‘Do Lord God, old Moster, Savior mine, come and get me, whole soul and body! Come now, I’m in a state of grace and pure and ready.’

“And then right spang in the middle of the night and in his praying and talking there come a heavy tromp, tromp on the porch and a bam, bam, bam on the side of the weatherboarding and then a big voice calling out, ‘All right, Big John, here I am, I’ve come for you.’

“Old Big John didn’t quite catch the words at first. And so he prayed out louder than ever. ‘O Heavenly Father,’ he said, ‘take me, Father, to thy holy sweet resting bosom, crown me with thy diadem of glory, fit me with a garment of joy and let me circle the battlements of Heaven like a pigeon white as snow and the sun shining on me making my whings’ — he said ‘whings’ — ‘yea, let me, Heavenly Father, sing thy praises celestial evermore.’

“And now the voice out on the porch boomed out good and loud, so loud that Big John couldn’t help hearing it. ‘All right, Big John, your prayers are answered. I’ve come to get you forevermore.’ Old Big John listened and then shivered and shook and made the bed rattle with his trembling.

“ ‘Who’s that, who’s that?’ he said.

“ ‘It’s me, the Great Lord God of Heaven and I’ve come for you in answer to your prayers — whole soul and body.’

“Old Big John he still shivered and shook but he quavered out in a little small voice, ‘Thank you, God.’

“ ‘Make haste,’ said the great voice, ‘I’ve got no time to spare. This is a busy day. I’m gathering in the souls sanctified all round and about.’

“And old Big John lying there in the bed did some mighty quick thinking. He raised up in his nightshirt and slid his feet out on the floor and sat there scratching his head and finally he said in a humble sweet voice, ‘Oh, Big Moster God, please suh, open the do’ so I can look out over my



crop and say goodbye to it, suh. I wants to say goodbye to all these earthly scenes below,' he said. So the white Marse Landlord standing out of sight on the porch in the darkness pulled back the door a little bit.

" 'C'mon, Big John,' he said, 'make it in a hurry.'

" 'Yes suh,' said Big John, now a little more cheerful like. 'Just gimme time, suh, to get my hat. It might be mighty cold flying up to Heaven through them icy stars. And you wouldn't want me to ketch cold, would you, Marse God?'

" 'That's right, I wouldn't. Get your coat too,' said the white landlord.

" 'And please, suh, could you crack the do' a little mo' funder so I can get a last look at the barn where my Mary mule is resting? It's mighty sad to say goodbye to that faithful mule and me plowing her so many days and hard.'

"And Marse Landlord pulled the door open a little wider. With that old Big John set hisself and out he went, same as if the hounds of the bad place were after him. All in his nightshirt he flew and with his derby hat set 'pon top of his head.

"Now the wife and children were standing out in the yard. They were on to the trick played by Marse White Landlord, and so Liza she screamed out, 'Run, John, run!'

"And the children they screamed out, 'Run, Pappy, run!' By this time Marse White Landlord with his white sheet on was chasing John in a hurry 'cross the cotton patch. And Liza screamed out again, 'Run, John, God's a-gainin on you!'

"And, Mr. Green! John showered down on his speed and he left God behind him same as if Jehovah was mired down in deep mud up to his knees. Yessir, old John's feet that night were shod with the wind, they say. And the pocket of his nightshirt dipped sand, they tell it, as he turned the edge of the field and was gone from there through the woods. To say you the truth, that nigger wasn't seen in the neighborhood for weeks on end. Then one day he came walking back over the hill and he was wearing shoes and a shirt and working overalls. And guess what he had in his hands. Guess. Why he had a maul and a wedge, a maul and a wedge to work in his new ground. And he set to work and they said he was a mighty man at splitting cordwood and getting up grubs from then on, for you see, God had ketched him and put that maul and wedge in his hand.

"God ketches everybody. 'Member that, son. Remember."

"Yes, Aunt Fanny, yes."

### *big jump*

An advantage, or a rapid advance or promotion in a job.

### *big leg*

Milk leg. "Poor Lilly Jones, purty as she is, has got that big leg again."

*big man*

Warden of a penitentiary.

*big meeting*

A revival meeting, often spoken of as a protracted meeting. These meetings were usually held in August when "laying by" time had come, that is, when tending the crops had been finished until the harvest came on. These were great social occasions and often ran from two to three weeks with preaching in the morning, then a picnic lunch or "dinner" on the grounds of the church, then preaching in the afternoon and often prayer meeting at night. There was much whooping and hollering in the old days, and many souls were converted and brought to Christ. In these latter days this type of meeting has become less protracted and the spiritual manifestations of unknown tongues and holy dancing and weepings and shoutings have also become quieter and less loud.

*big mouth*

A loud talker, a braggart.

*put on the big pot*

To show full hospitality.

*big shot*

A millionaire, a prominent person, same as big bug, big dog, big wig, etc.

*big stuff*

Also a big shot, and also a big business deal, heavy artillery. "After the whiz-bangs, they turned loose with the big stuff."

*big sugar*

A kindhearted and generous boss. Also, a big man who is sugar daddy to some girl who is serving him.

*big time*

The highest professional ranks, as in sports, the theatre, etc.

*big tree, little possum*

Big effort and little result.

*big wheel*

A very important person.

*big wig*

A big shot, a rich man, a big politician.

*big wind*

A braggart, a blowhard.

*b'ile*

Boil.

*b'ile your cabbage down*

Lovemaking that cools a woman off.

*bill*

Mouth. "That Silver Queen corn is the sweetest stuff you ever popped your bill on."

The nose or the face. "He hauled off and punched him in the bill."

*"Bill Bailey"*

A Tin Pan Alley song that has been popular and handed on by word-of-mouth from work field to parlor and back again.

It was one of our favorite pieces. The rhythm of the chopping hoe went well with it, especially its chorus, and, too, our hard working Christian life made us feel superior to old Bill riding around in a "diamond coach" — the sorry scoundrel! Even as we children chopped and sang we wondered why "she" would cry after the rapsallion, "weeping hard."

" 'Won't you come home, Bill Bailey,

Won't you come home?"

She moans the whole day long.

" 'I'll do the cooking, darling,

I'll pay the rent.

I knows I've done you wrong.

" 'Member dat rainy evening

I drove you out

With nothing but a fine tooth comb?

" 'I know I'se to blame,

Well, ain't dat a shame?

Bill Bailey, won't you please come home?" "

*billy*

A policeman's club or stick. Also a billy goat.

*billy-be-damned!*

A mild expletive.

*"Billy Boy"*

A sort of comic version more or less of the "Lord Randall" ballad. We used to say the bouncing words of the numerous stanzas as we chopped cotton.

" 'Oh where have you been Billy Boy, Billy Boy,

Oh where have you been pretty (charming) Billy?  
‘I have been to find a wife  
She’s the joy of my life.  
She’s a young thing and won’t leave her mammy.’ ”

### *Old Billy Buck*

A guessing game. It is known in many countries under different names. In our Valley version one player shuts his eyes, or sometimes he is blindfolded, and bends over. He is then thumped, or pounded on the back with the flat of the hand while the questioner chants —

“Old Billy Buck  
Try your luck,  
How many fingers  
Do I hold up?”

Fingers are held up by the questioner. The guess is made by Buck. Say he guesses four when three are held up. The chant and the pounding continue.

“Four you said and three it was  
Old Billy Buck,  
Try your luck,  
How many fingers do I hold up?”

If the guess is correct, the speaker says, for instance —

“Four you said and four it was.”

Places are exchanged and the game goes on.

In the game brought into the Valley by the early Scotch settlers, Buck was a deer, and the question was “How many hands do I hold up?”

### *billy goat*

A male goat. We children used to sing a billy goat song as we worked in the fields —

“A billy goat was feeling fine,  
Ate six red shirts right off the line.”

The song went on to tell how his owner in anger tied him to a railroad track so that a train would kill him. But Billy was smart. As the train was rushing toward him —

“Bill gave a shriek of roaring pain,  
Coughed up a shirt and flagged the train.”

“Billy Goat” also means a lecher. The term fitted the widower, old Henry Leach, so Mis’ Sarah Harmon declared. “You know, Paul,” she said, “that

old billy goat went and got him a gal for a wife, only fourteen years old — just a little frying-size biddy that had no more sense than a pond gannet. He traded her daddy six hogs and four gallons of moonshine liquor for the pesky young'un. Now they've got a baby, a little old shriveled-up critter, looks like a baboon. I've seen it. Ain't that a purty looking way to carry on the human race? I ask you."

***bimeby***

By and by.

***bind***

A tight fix, a worrisome situation. "The United States got itself in a bind in Vietnam."

To constipate. "Cheese always binds me, so I can't eat it."

***binder***

A token.

A payment that binds or makes legal a trade or a deal.

***binge***

A spree, a breakdown, a drunken debauch. "After he joined Alcoholics Anonymous he stayed sober for a year, but last Saturday he tore loose and went on a binge."

***bird***

Derision, heckling, dismissal. "After the big boss bawled him out, he gave him the bird, and now he's hunting for a job."

A woman's pudendum, also the male organ.

A lively or exceptional girl or boy. "He's a bird, I'll tell you that!"

A *bird* in the hand is worth two in the bush.

A *bird* is known by its feathers.

The early *bird* catches the worm.

Every *bird* likes its own nest.

It's an ill *bird* that fouls its own nest.

It's a lazy *bird* that won't build her own nest.

A little *bird* wants but a little nest.

Sprinkle the tail of a *bird* with salt, and he'll be easy to catch.

***bird blinding***

Once a popular night sport among the boys and girls. In Harnett County we used to split long lightwood splinters, set them afire at one end and then

tramp into the newground where brush had been piled in the land clearing. We would surround a brush pile, hold up our lights and shake them, and as the birds came out blinded, we would flail the air with our brush broom mops. Sometimes we killed a sparrow or a snowbird, but most often we did more courting and snuggling up one with the other than we did hunting.

*to join the bird gang*

To run away in a hurry, to speed off, to vamoose. "Man, when that blunderbuss fired off, I joined the bird gang going away from there."

*"A Bird in a Gilded Cage"*

A sentimental favorite out of the "gay nineties" period. It tells the story of a young girl who married for money. My mother and sisters loved it, especially the chorus with its vivid imagery and moral teaching.

"She's only a bird in a gilded cage,  
A beautiful sight to see.  
You may think she's happy and free from care.  
She's not, though she seems to be.  
'Tis sad when you think of her wasted life,  
For youth cannot mate with age.  
And her beauty was sold  
For an old man's gold.  
She's a bird in a gilded cage."

As for my sisters, they didn't need any moral teaching of this sort. Though the four of them were beautiful and human enough, there was no man around, young or old, with any gold for their tempting. They all loved and were loved by more suitable husbands.

*bird-nest protection*

The wisdom of all nature's creatures is an absorbing mystery. Maybe what they learn by experience with enough passage of time in repetition becomes instinctive.

My neighbor recently pointed out to me a wren's nest built in his garage. A piece of dried snake's skin was in the nest.

"You notice when you can, Paul," he said, "and you'll often see a snake's skin in a bird nest, especially with wrens. This keeps other marauding birds away, for all of them — especially little birds — are mortally afraid of snakes or any sign of them."

I wonder how wrens learned not to be afraid and other birds didn't.

*bird omen*

A bird that appears suddenly at a house or flies inside it or hangs about it presages sorrow or bad luck. And if it is a white bird, a death in the house is pretty certain to follow.

“When Hardy Gilchrist’s mother was dying,” said old Aunt Margaret Messer to me one day, “there come a little white bird and flew around in the room and made a pitiful cheep, cheep sound and then flew out the window. And later in the evening it come and set on the comb of the housetop and still made its pitiful little cheepings. Then about sundown Miz Gilchrist reared up in bed and cried out, with the sunset in the west shining on her, saying that it was the glory of heaven spilling through the pearly gates to welcome her home. I was setting up with her and saw and heard it. And then she died. When we went out and looked for the little bird, it was gone. And he ain’t been seen around here since. But you watch my word, when some other person in the neighborhood comes down to die, like as not we’ll see that little bird flying around. It’s a sad thing to think about, but as the Bible says, ‘The bird shall cleanse the house.’ Amen.”

There was the case of Henry Whaley. He lived near Wilmington, and right after he had covered his house with cedar shingles, he looked up and saw a couple of buzzards roosting up there. He hated to have his shingles dirtied, so he got out his old muzzle loader and shot at the buzzards, killing one of them. The next day, believe it or not, his wife and daughter were killed by lightning. As Mr. Jim Willis said, “A buzzard is a sort of sacred soul.”

Then there was Dr. Joe Robbins near Dunn. He got sold on airplanes and bought himself one, and every time he got a chance he was up flying it. And finally he was so taken with flying that he quit going to church and was out early every Sunday morning, when the weather would allow, flying back and forth in the air above the houses and fields. Old Burgess McFarland told me that he warned the doctor about desecrating the Lord’s Day. “Yes sir, I warned him before he died. Now the very day he was mortally hurt he was sailing way up there in the clouds all alone when suddenly a voice spoke to him and said, ‘Dr. Robbins, stop it. I tell you again, stop flying that thing on Sunday. If you don’t, something bad is going to happen to you for violating the Lord’s Day.’ But as you know, Doc wouldn’t stop and went right on flying, saying to himself no doubt that it was his own imagination made him think he heard a voice. And then the very day he fell, a little white bird come before time and lit on his airplane wing and sung and sung a great long while the most pitiful, sad song — peep, peep. And then it went away and it weren’t a minute before the Doc started falling out of the sky to his death, to his mortal wounding, I say. It’s the truth. Miss Dorine Hughes, the nurse, said Doc kept babbling while he was delirious and was sinking on down to his death. I tell you, Paul Green, it don’t do to go against the will and the warning signs of the Lord, and if Doc had minded his God and Savior, he’d be here with us today and not where he is. Ay, Lord, I hate to think on it!”

*for the birds*

Nonsense, not worthy of any sort of consideration. "All that talk of his about reforming is for the birds."

*birds of a feather*

A gang of rogues, thieves, also any gathering of like people. The term is usually derogatory.

*Birds of a feather* flock together.

*Birds of prey* never sing.

Old *birds* are hard to catch.

*bird's-nest*

See "Queen Anne's lace."

*bird sweat*

A light rain.

Rubbing one's nose in butter on one's *birthday* will bring good luck.

*birthday suit*

In the nude.

*birthmark*

A peculiar mark or blemish on a young creature's body at birth. There are innumerable folk-beliefs about birthmarks, their cause and cure.

Aunt Candace Murdoch said her boy was born with the mark of a pickle on his hip because she had eaten so many sour pickles during her pregnancy. Constant scrubbing with fresh chicken's blood finally got rid of it, she said. It is widely believed too that if a pregnant woman develops a craving for some fruit, vegetable or drink, or anything, and that desire is not satisfied, her baby will be born with a birthmark on some part of his body resembling the shape of the desired object or sometimes even to its color.

This reminds me of the Negro couple, Phil Ochiltree and his wife Lucy, and their dilemma. During her pregnancy Lucy kept telling Phil that she craved snow. "But how you gonna get snow, woman, here in the heat of July?" he snapped. Still she kept asking for snow. Finally outdone, he said, "Goddamit, there ain't gonna be no snow till winter time and maybe not then and you know it." To which she replied, according to Lonnie Cofield, "Well if this here baby child is born white don't blame me."

I heard of another baby who had the mark of a red apple on its forehead, and of another that had a red apple near its eye — both caused, so the mothers said, because of an unsatisfied craving for June Sweet'nings (q.v.) in the winter time. One of the mothers said she took the advice of old Phinny Barlow, the cow doctor, who told her she should do the way mother cows



did when some of their offsprings were marked — lick away the sign. And so she did, licking nine mornings in succession, and the mark disappeared.

Among the many things desired by pregnant women are apples, cherries, grapes, molasses, potatoes, strawberries, turnip greens, whiskey, ice cream, snow, Brazil nuts, oranges and tomatoes.

A sudden fright to a pregnant woman too can cause her baby to be marked. A rabbit that bounces up suddenly in front of her and startles her may cause her baby to have a harelip. Also any very impressive sight or vivid object seen at the moment of conception may mark the child to be. An illustration of this is given in Genesis 30 where the wily Jacob added greatly to his flocks at the expense of his father-in-law Laban. The Scripture reads — “Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut tree and pilled (peeled) white strakes in them and made the white appear which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink. And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted. And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle. And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in; so the feeble were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.”

### *birtle*

To cut up, to dance wildly. “I birtled a bit, lad, a wee bit.”

### *biscuit*

A watch. We children used to recite a rhymed riddle:

“Round as a biscuit,  
Busy as a bee,  
Something inside it  
Goes ticka-ticka-tee.”

### *biscuit cutter*

A cook.

### *biscuit roller*

Also a cook.

### *bit*

Cheated. “We traded horses and, man, did I get bit.”

A tiny amount, an iota. "Every little bit helps," as the old woman said when she pissed in the sea. Also another old saying fits: "Every little bit helps," as the old man said when he farted in the storm.

as soon be *bit* as scared to death

If that had been a snake he would have *bit* you.

*every bit and grain*

Completely, to the last iota, just as much. "I'm every bit and grain as good as you are, for all your praying."

*bitch party*

A female party.

The *bite* is bigger than the mouth.

Don't *bite* the hand that feeds you.

*bit for manners*

A bit of food left on one's plate for manners' sake so as not to seem too hungry. My mother always insisted on our following this custom.

*biter bit*

A reversal of intent or expectation, and over-reaching, usually with something of mockery in the happening, a situation or action in which a person falls victim to his own doing, as depicted, for instance, in the Sophoclean drama "Oedipus," or an ironical result as in Petronius' story of "The Matron of Ephesus," in O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi," or even in the doings of one Fate Hargrave.

Fate, I guess, was about the stingiest man in the Cape Fear Valley. There was nothing he wouldn't do to turn a penny. But one day he tried for a penny too much, and so became a sort of laughingstock to his neighbors when the story got out.

He raised sheep along with his small farming and sold mutton in the town of Dunston, and a terrible fellow he was for squeezing out every last cent's worth he could get for his sheep.

It happened that his flock got down in numbers from selling, and about this time a stray bitch took up at his house hungry as she could be. But of course Fate wouldn't give the poor creature a crumb. At first he wouldn't. He ran her off with sticks and chunked rocks at her, but she came back. A second time he didn't run her off, for an idea had come into his stingy mind. He kept her and fed her and in the coming weeks fattened her up. Then one day he was up early before light and killed her and skinned her and took the meat into the town and sold it for mutton to Jeems MacIntosh, another Scotchman, who ran a cafe.

After Fate had haggled and got his money and gone away Jeems grew suspicious. Why, I don't know. Perhaps he found some dog hair on the carcass rather than sheep's wool. Anyway, from suspicion he came to certainty in his own mind. So he put the "mutton" in his ice box and bided his chance. Sometime later, it might have been a few weeks or so, Fate came into the cafe for lunch. He was over in town attending court, for he dearly loved to sit in the courtroom and listen to murder trials and hear the sentencing to death of Negro criminals when such was to be.

"What'll you have?" asked Jeems, the cafe man, as Fate sat down at the counter.

"What've you got?" asked Fate.

"Well, we're running a little short for the time being of everything except mutton. We've got some mighty good fresh mutton left."

"Enough said," said Fate, "you know how I like mutton. That's what I want."

So the mutton was cooked and served up. Fate ate full and hearty, for he would get every cent's worth, as I say, even to sopping his plate clean. "That's good," he said, "good, and I mean good."

"There's more where it come from," said Jeems.

"No, I reckon not."

"Being it's you — no charge for a second helping," said Jeems, "seeing as how you sell me a lot of stuff."

"Well, no sooner said than done," said Fate, hunching himself closer up to the counter in fine good will, pleased that he was getting a double big meal so cheap.

"And besides, it's nearing Christmas and all," said Jeems, "the spirit of the giver, you know."

"Right," said Fate, "Christmas is the time for friends to loosen up. I shore appreciate it, Jeems."

So he had a generous second helping. When he had finished he pushed back his plate. "Yes sir, I've et mutton here and I've et mutton yonder," he said, "but this beats everything I've had to a fare-ye-well. I'd like to know where you got that good mutton, Jeems. Who'd you buy if from?"

"From you," said Jeems, "about a month ago." And he took the knife and fork quickly out of the way.

"From me?" said Fate, his voice a little fuzzy.

"Yeh, from you. You remember that Saturday morning when you brought that sheep in here and I complained about it being a little poor and small."

Fate gulped once or twice and then in a low voice said, "Yeh, I remember that —"

"Hey, where you going Fate?"

But Fate was already fleeing out of the door hunting a quiet emptying

place in the back alley.

He *bites* off more than he can chew.

*bite the dust*

To fail, to fall on one's face, to be thrown from a horse, to die.

*bite the thumb at*

To mock, as in the opening of "Romeo and Juliet."

*biting frost*

A heavy white frost. After such a frost the weather usually turns warm. After a day or two the rain comes and the wind whips around to the north. Then freezing weather comes once more and white or biting frost is repeated.

*bit of fluff*

A girl, a lighthearted female.

*bit of muslin*

A girl, a woman.

Once *bitten*, twice shy.

*bitter* as gall

*bitter* as soot

*bitty*

Same as biddy, a baby chicken.

*little bitty*

Very small indeed, tiny. "He was a little bitty man."

*biz*

Business.

*blab*

To reveal confidential information, to talk too freely, gossip.

*blabber-lipped*

Thick-lipped.

*blab (blabber)-mouth*

A loud-mouthed person, a gossip, a loose-tongued talker.

*in the black*

To show a profit. "He's in the black, not the red, this year, and his wife is smiling again."

*black and blue*

Skin discoloration from an accident, but more often due to bruises from

a fight or beating.

***black and white***

Written down. "If you want me to believe that and depend on it, put it down there in black and white."

***black*** as a crow

***black*** as a raven

***black*** as a stack of black cats

***black*** as coal

***black*** as ink

***black*** as midnight

***black*** as night

***black*** as pitch

***black*** as sin

***black*** as soot

***black*** as the ace of spades

***black*** as the back of the chimney

***black ball***

To vote against, to disapprove of.

***Blackbeard***

A notorious pirate who preyed on shipping along the coast of North Carolina and at the mouth of the Cape Fear River in the early part of the eighteenth century. His name was Edward Teach or Thatch and he was described by contemporaries as "a swaggering merciless brute." Stede Bonnet, a man of wealth and good standing in the West Indies, joined Blackbeard in his piracy. Finally in a battle with British forces Blackbeard was killed; later Bonnet was captured and hanged.

Blackbeard received his nickname because of his heavy and voluminous black beard. Several plays and ballads have been written about him.

***blackberry***

A popular briary bush. We used to go blackberry picking and bring home bucketsful of the dark berries to be canned, made into jam or eaten fresh with sugar and milk. Blackberry root tea was especially good for dysentery.

***blackberry winter***

A cold time that is supposed to come in May when the blackberry bushes

are in blossom.

***black booger***

A frightful night creature dreamed up out of the folk imagination and used to frighten children or persuade them to behave by threats of his coming. Sometimes identified with the devil.

***black book***

An imaginary judgment book in which the record of one's sins and errors is kept.

***black boy***

Cast iron figures of Negro boys used as hitching posts, lantern stands, etc.

***Old Black Boy***

One of the many religious folklore names in the Valley for the devil. Among others are the Old Bad Boy, Old Booger, Satan, Beelzebub, Old Scratch, Old Nick, the Evil One, the Arch-Fiend, the Anti-Christ, the Foul Fiend, Mephistopheles, Mephisto, the Adversary, the Wicked One, the Old Serpent, Belial, and so and on.

"Whilst I was sitting there nodding by the corpse of sinful Acharel Knott," said Benton Barnes, "I saw just as plain as could be the Old Black Boy crack open the door, look in, and then come on in and creep tiptoe on his forked hoofs to the bed. He reached toward the corpse, and something like a great big white moth flew out of Acharel's mouth, and the Old Black Boy grabbed it in his two paws and made with it back through the door, and I could hear him whickering and laughing as he sped off in the night. Yes sir, I believe it was Acharel's soul he carried away. And when I told Preacher Johnson about it later, he said it surely must have been so and let that be a warning to all of us to live right."

If a *black cat* crosses one's path, bad luck will follow.

***a black cat's blood***

According to superstitious belief, spreading a black cat's blood on an affected body part will cure the shingles.

***black cloud***

A gathering of Negroes.

***black coat***

A clergyman.

***Black Draught***

A patent medicine good for everything, especially for tight bowels. This powdery stuff — a teaspoonful mixed with water for a dose — was, next to calomel, the most awful gagging drink we children had to endure. My

father found it a favorite with which to clean us out. My mother preferred calomel. Only a belief in the rightness of my parents' authority kept me from learning to hate them for these ministrations.

### *blackening*

Shoe blacking. We used to make it by mixing soot and water.

### *black-eyed peas*

A popular garden crop in the South. If cooked with hog jowl and eaten on New Year's Day, these peas are supposed to bring financial good luck for the coming twelve months. It is common talk around in the Valley that a person will have as many dollars then as peas he eats on New Year's Day. I was told so when a boy, and I ate away manfully, counting the number of peas spoonful by spoonful as I ate them. But when no betterment came in my poor finances, I lost my taste for peas, if I ever had had any. To tell the truth, to my way of thinking they are mighty poor eating at best. But I heard of one fellow who loved them even to gluttony.

"It was a pow'ful rainy night and as dark as the inside of a grave with wind blowing," said Lonnie Cofield, "and this fellow was traveling down the river road toward Fayetteville, hoping to find a place to stay. The country weren't settled in them days the way it is now, and a man out at night had to shift for sleeping quarters the best he could. On and on he went. Now why he was out in such a night I don't know. I reckon he was some sort of drummer and had been trying to make a late sale and so got caught in the storm earlier than he had thought for. Anyhow, he kept pushing right on. Well, finally he saw a dim red firelight ahead of him, and he hurried on fast as he could and come to a little cabin by the roadside. He whammed and hammered on the door and finally it was opened by a rough sort of farmer man. The young fellow asked if he could come inside from the storm, and the farmer let him in.

"A good lightwood fire was going in the fireplace and the fellow was mighty glad to see it, for he was wet slam through to the skin. The farmer had a young wife and she was mighty polite and hospitable at once to the young fellow and helped him off with his wet coat and hung it on a chair to dry and brung him a towel to wipe his face and hair and scurried about for this and that to make him comfortable.

" 'You're mighty kind,' the fellow said to her, 'and soon's I get dry and the storm lets up I'll be on my way toward Fayetteville.'

" 'Seems like the storm's getting worse,' she said.

"The farmer was a kindhearted fellow and he told the stranger that they'd be glad to offer him some of their poor fare. 'We were just about to set down to a late supper, such as it is,' he said.

" 'I'm sure anything would taste good to me,' said the young fellow, 'for I ain't et since breakfast.'

“ ‘We ain’t got nothing but a big pot of black-eyed peas,’ said the farmer. ‘Everything’s mighty short with us this year.’ ”

“ ‘Black-eyed peas!’ said the young fellow all quick-like. ‘Nothing I love better than black-eyed peas.’ ”

“By this time he was getting dry and the young wife set out another plate and brung the big pot of peas from the stove and put it on the table. And they all went to it. That fellow sure did prove the truth of his words. He soon cleaned up his first big helping and held out his plate for more, and the young wife was quick to oblige him. The farmer looked at him and said, ‘Like you said, you really like black-eyed peas!’ ”

“ ‘True, true,’ said the young fellow as he gobbled away. ‘And whoever cooked these peas knew how to do it.’ ”

“ ‘I cooked ’em,’ said the young wife, pleased and looking across at him. ”

“ ‘When she had helped the fellow to a third fill, the farmer got up, lifted the pot and took it over and put it firmly back on the stove. ‘We’ll need some in the house for tomorrow,’ he said. ”

“ ‘The storm raged and roared outside and the young wife said it looked like too bad a night for anybody to be out in. ”

“ ‘Yes, I reckon it really is,’ said the farmer, who as I said was at heart a good sort of fellow. And he went on, ‘As you see we ain’t got but one room to our house and only one bed, but we’ll accommodate you as best we can.’ ”

“ ‘Thank you most kindly,’ said the young man, ‘you mustn’t disfurnish yourself. I’ll sleep anywhere — lie down on the floor here till day comes.’ ”

“ ‘You might catch your death of cold doing that,’ said the young wife. ‘It’s mighty drafty on the floor.’ ”

“ ‘So it is,’ said the good man. ‘Well, seeing the night’s the way it is and you a wayfaring stranger and the Good Book advising us to be neighborly one with another, I tell you what — we’ll share our bed with you. My wife can sleep next to the wall, I’ll lie in the middle and you next to me, and no harm done.’ ”

“And so it was. And there they lay side by side while the rain poured and the wind blew. Before long the good farmer was sleeping away, and his snores began to sound in the room. But the young wife wasn’t sleeping. And maybe the stranger wasn’t sleeping either. Soon the storm began to subside. The young wife all of a sudden punched her husband in the side, ‘Wake up, wake up,’ she cried out. ‘Wake up!’ He grunted and squirmed and finally wanted to know what the trouble was. ‘Why can’t you hear it? Can’t you?’ she called. ”

“ ‘Hear what?’ he mumbled. ”

“ ‘Hear the pony down in the stable kicking away? He’s kicking that ”



calf, that's what he is, about to kill it. Get up and go down there and stop it! Quick, hurry! Oh, oh, my poor little calf!

"Growling and grumbling, the good husband finally crawled out of bed, pulled on his shoes and made his way out of the house and on down to the barn. The young wife turned quickly toward the young fellow and whispered in his ear, 'Now's your chance.'

"You know what that fellow done then, Paul?" said Lonnie.

"No, I don't, Lonnie, but I know what I —"

"Why, he got up and et the rest of them black-eyed peas."

### *blackguard*

To tease, to talk rough to, to berate.

### *black gum*

(Often pronounced bla'gum). A tree that grows plentifully in swamps and lowlands. The wood is so tough that lumbermen leave it alone. We used to cut down a good-sized tree and saw off narrow sections to make wheels for our play wagons. The old trees often become hollow as they decay and die and bee gums were made from them. The little limb sprouts from the small trees made good toothbrushes — nearly all the snuff-dippers used them.

### *black haw*

A small tree or shrub that grows well in either damp or dry woods, common in the Valley as throughout the southeast. Tea made from the berries of this shrub was used, especially by the Negroes, as a blood purifier. The old grannies used it also to help prevent abortion.

### *a black hen will lay a white egg*

A folk saying which suggests one should not be too quick in his judgment.

### *black jack*

A tough slow-growing oak tree common to the sandhill country in the Valley. Pretty much worthless. Also a card game.

### *a black letter day*

An unlucky day, a day on which bad news was received.

### *black Maria*

The sweatbox, the solitary cell for confinement, used on the chain gangs to make recalcitrant prisoners behave.

A hearse.

### *black racer*

A blacksnake.

### *black story*

A downright lie. "That boy told me a black story and I whupped him."

*black wagon*

A hearse. See "black Maria."

*black walnut*

A large-growing and valuable timber tree. It is especially prized for the making of cabinets and other furniture. Our daughter had some walnut boards which were cut from our farm shipped to Boston, and Frank Hubbard made her a beautiful harpsichord out of them. She performs on it most happily. Juice from the green walnut hull was most efficacious in the treatment of ringworm, poison ivy and skin diseases. A salve made from the leaves was supposed to be a sure cure for leg sores.

*blaggard*

Blackguard.

*blame it!*

A mild expletive.

*blast*

A scolding, a bawling out.

*blast it!*

A mild expletive. "Blast it, the blasted fool went down there and sided my corn so close it died."

*blast off*

To fire off a volley of words, to blow one's top, to take off at great speed.

*blate (bleat)*

We boys used to make blates, sometimes we called them hawk-callers. We usually took a tough little twig of green oak or hickory, split one end and inserted an oak leaf, trimming it close to the edges. Then, putting it to our lips, we blew it like a flute or a fife. A tiny shrill little sound would result, somewhat like the faraway cry of a red hawk in the sky.

*blather*

Loud boastful talk.

*blaze*

To face (to hack) a turpentine tree for the resin.

Don't light a *blaze* you can't put out.

*blaze-face*

An unreliable, unsteady horse or mule.

A horse or a cow with a white mark in the forehead.

*go to blazes*

An imprecation or a term of scornful dismissal.

*Old Blazes*

The devil.

*bleed*

Urinating. "I'll be with you in a minute as soon as I go off here for a bleed."

To moan and complain. "I bled all over the psychiatrist but he didn't move a muscle, just sat there like a dummy. 'Go on,' he said, 'go on,' and I kept bleeding."

To extort from. "That woman bled him plumb white. He denied all but she got every dollar he had."

*bleed like a stuck pig**to stop bleeding*

Use alum, gun powder, cobwebs or soot. Our one tenant, Wesley Armstrong, woke our family up about three o'clock one morning, saying his wife Meta was bleeding (after childbirth) and he had to have some cobwebs. My father crawled up in the loft of our house with a lantern and finally found the cobwebs and Wesley hurried away happy. Next day he said, "It cyured Meta up fine — yessuh."

*bleeding heart*

A sentimentally kind person, overly sympathetic. "Yeh, I've heard that fellow with his bleeding heart talk ag'in' capital punishment. Nuts!"

*'bleeged*

Obliged.

*bleeper*

A faux pas, a big blunder.

*I'll be blessed!*

An interjection.

*Blessed*

The well-known and comforting beatitudes. (See Matthew 5:3-11)

*"Blessed Assurance"*

One of the most popular and long-lasting hymns in our religious circle. I can still see my mother working about the house, making up the beds, tending to the cooking on the wood stove, or churning away and singing confidently and often gaily to herself the comforting words.

“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His spirit, washed in His blood.”

*“Blessed Be the Name”*

Another of the talented and devoted Charles Wesley’s hymns. The tune was written by R.E. Hudson. It was one of my mother’s favorite around-the-house songs, and its four-four time went well with both her sewing machine and churn.

“O for a thousand tongues to sing,  
Blessed be the name of the Lord!  
The glories of my God and King,  
Blessed be the name of the Lord!”

*bless God!*

An interjection.

*bless his (your, her, its) heart*

An expression of sympathy or admiration.

*bless my stars!*

To be lucky, also an interjection.

*bless out*

To scold, to berate, to curse. “He blessed him out from A to Z.”

*“Blest Be the Tie That Binds”*

Another popular and comforting hymn.

*blest if it ain’t*

Still another interjection.

*’bliged*

Obliged.

*blind*

To be dull, stupid, unable to see the truth in front of one’s face.

A hut of boughs or camouflaged arrangement in which hunters hide to wait the appearance of game.

Exceedingly drunk.

Also a common term among students in reference to an examination which they passed easily or feel that they have answered nearly all the questions correctly. “I blinded old Horace on that examination, yes sir, I blinded him from a to z.”

as *blind* as a mole

The *blind* man eats many a fly.

A *blind* man needs no looking glass.

A *blind* man should not judge colors.

To the *blind* all things seem dark.

None are so *blind* as those who won't see.

If the *blind* lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

In the land of the *blind* the one-eyed man is king.

### *Blindfold (Blindman's Buff)*

A game popular everywhere in the western world as far as I can find out and popular too in ancient times in Greece according to the records. There is an ironic allusion in Luke 22:64. During the accusation against Jesus: "And when they had blindfolded him they struck" (buffed) "him on the face and asked him, saying 'Prophecy who is it that smote thee?' "

Players in the modern game usually arrange themselves in something of a standing circle with a blindfolded member in the center. This member is agreed on or chosen by any of a number of counting-out rhymes. He or she is turned around three times and then attempts to catch one of the other players who are permitted to touch or even strike him — buffet him. When he has succeeded in catching one he must guess his or her identity. And here much fun takes place when, say, a boy feels a girl — or vice versa — to find out who she is.

The "feeling" is usually discreet. If the guess is correct, places are exchanged, and the game goes on.

### *blind side*

The weak side, the most assailable spot.

### *blind staggers*

A disease of horses or mules. It is the same as sleepy staggers.

There are numerous cures or medicines for this from kerosene oil to turpentine. One that was common in the Valley was very much like the medicine or therapeutic treatment I found described in some papers of my great-great-great-grandfather, Colonel Alexander McAllister, in Cumberland County. His prescription went as follows: "Take one ounce of camphyre dissolved in spirits, this to be squirted up their nostrils at the end of every two hours — a teaspoonful of it also to be put in their ears three times a day: a teaspoonful in each ear and every time the camphyre

and spirits is squirted up their nostrils there must be tobacco smoke blew up their nostrils by a smoking pipe. Then take tobacco and tar, set them on fire and smoke the creatures head over it three times a day and give them for their drink tea made of sassafras root and dogwood root. This by diligent attendance is given for a certain cure."

*stone blind*

Completely, irrevocably blind.

*blind tiger*

A moonshiner's outfit for making illicit liquor. Its usually secret hiding place in the deep woods and the danger attached to its working gave it its name. The term goes back to the late 18th century.

*blind trail*

A false lead, a course that leads nowhere.

*blink*

An instant of time. "In a blink that good god (pileated woodpecker) was gone, and there I was with my old muzzle loader cocked and ready to pull down on him."

*on the blink*

Crippled, in need of repair. "My old buggy has gone on the blink, and I've got to get it fixed."

*blip*

A quick turn, a sudden act. Also an interjection. "I grabbed the underholt and, blip! I blipped him head over heels against the frozen ground."

A trollop.

*blister*

To spank severely. "Behave yourself or I will blister your hide."

A *blister* on your tongue means that you have told a lie.

as *blithe* as a bird

as *blithe* as a lark

*block*

The family tree or parent. "Yes sir, he's just like his daddy — a chip off the old block."

*blockade*

Bootleg liquor.

*blockade runner*

In the latter part of the Civil War the southern states suffered mightily from

lack of supplies, due to the blockade by the North. Cotton could be bought for eight cents a pound in the South and sold in England for fifty to seventy cents, and cheap goods could be brought back to be sold at high prices. The main center of blockade running was Wilmington, near the mouth of the Cape Fear. It was dangerous business but many shipowners tried it. Stories and ballads of bravery and suffering of many a stout soul have become part of our Valley folk heritage. See "Rose Grenow."

*blood*

Quality, high lineage or heritage, aristocracy. "Why, man, he's of the blood — didn't you know that!"

*Blood* is thicker than water.

*Blood* will tell.

*blood and guts man*

A fierce fighter, a bulldozing personality.

*blood and thunder tales*

Wild hair-raising stories, sensational accounts.

*blood-blister*

A clot of blood under the skin such as of a mashed finger.

*blooded*

Of first quality, of superior stock. Usually said of fine race horses or prize bulls.

*blood money*

Money paid for a crime, usually murder.

*blood oath*

An oath signed in one's own blood.

After the Battle of Culloden in 1746 between the English and the Scots in which the Scots were defeated, the latter were required to take a blood oath of loyalty to the English king. Even though thousands of Scots migrated to North Carolina, the majority of them still felt their oath was binding, and therefore they supported the Tory cause against the Patriots. "I ha' taken the blood oath," said many a one, "and I will na break it." And no wonder for it was a fearsome declaration, as witness Flora MacDonald's signing — "I, Flora MacDonald of Skye, do swear and as I shall answer to my God in the great day of judgment solemnly take oath that I shall never bear arms against the rightful king of Britain, that I shall forego all action, all tokens and symbols of separation, and may I never see my husband and children, father, mother, loved ones or relations, may I be killed in battle as a coward and lie without Christian sacrament, unburied and forgot far

from the graves of my forefathers and kindred. May all this come across me if I break my oath — in the name of my king and Almighty God. Amen.” Then the wrist was pricked, the pen dipped in the resulting blood and the document signed.

*blood of the lamb*

A symbolism for the blood of Christ.

*blood on the moon*

A red splotch which is supposed to be a sign of bad luck.

*bloodroot*

This spring flower with its pale-lobed leaf and showy white blossoms grows in rich open woods from March into May. A tea made from the root is supposed, like carrots, to be good for the eyesight, also good for the nerves and coughs and colds. Two ounces of this tea in one pint of alcohol made a fine stimulant for both babies and rheumatic old men. The babies were allowed two teaspoonfuls for a dose once a day. The old men could suit themselves. In the latter case I doubt the pint lasted very long.

*blood-shotten (bloodshot)*

Red and inflamed, most often has reference to the eyes.

*bloodsucker*

A low-down character, a miser, a chiseler.

*bloody flag*

A woman's monthly. “Stay 'way, boy, she's got her bloody flag up.”

*bloody flux*

Bloody dysentery. In many old records and letters of Valley people this dread disease is referred to frequently. “Reverend Obadiah Easom is dead of the bloody flux.”

*to yell bloody Mary*

To shriek, to cry out wildly. Also, to cry bloody murder.

*to go blooey*

To explode.

*blooming like a peach*

In fresh health, especially said of girls.

*blooming like a rose*

*blotto*

Stone drunk.



***blow***

To brag, to boast. "Listen to that fellow blow — you'd think he had a million dollars in his pocket."

To leave in a hurry. "It looks like snow, I'd better blow."

To catch one's breath. "Let the mules blow a while."

***blow a gasket***

To go off into hysterics.

***blowed***

Past tense of blow.

***I be blowed.***

An interjection. Also, to be outdone.

***blow great guns***

A violent wind, a tornado.

***blow hot and cold***

To vacillate, to be wishy-washy, also to be unreliable.

***blow in***

To arrive. "We had a lot of company blow in last night and our house is full to the eaves."

To spend money recklessly. "He had a thousand dollars when he went up to that roulette wheel and he blew it all in."

***to blow off steam***

To give vent to one's packed-up feelings.

***blowing out candles***

Birthday custom. One is supposed to make a wish come true by blowing out all the candles on his birthday cake with the first breath.

***blowing out fire***

In my neighborhood Zekiel McCrae, an ancient Negro who said he was "nigh onto a hundred," claimed he could blow fire out of a burn. He had a "patient" now and then who happily said he could. Zekiel would put his finger on the burned place, mutter a lot of queer grunts and growls as he blew his breath mightily on it. Finally he would say "Yo' pain is now done gone away, the fire is blowed out, and soon it'll quit hurting, yes ma'm, yes, suh. And I charges only a quarter."

***blow off steam***

To give voice to one's feelings or temper. The Freudians believe in this, though they call it by a different name.

*blow one's own horn*

To boast, to brag.

*blow one's stack (top)*

To give way to high temper.

*blowout*

A party, ball, entertainment, usually gay and loud.

*blow out his light*

To shoot, to kill. "He heighoed out in the yard. I opened the door and he let fire at me and shot me right through the side. I reached in, got my shotgun from behind the door and pulled down on him. I blowed out his lights."

He who *blows* dust will fill his own eyes.

He who *blows* his own horn makes poor music for others.

*blow sky high*

To upbraid fiercely, to expose to complete shame and denunciation.

*blow the whistle on*

To cause to stop, put an end to an action.

*blow up*

To bawl out, to scold. "I made a little teeny mistake, and, Lord, did he blow me up for it."

*blubber*

To weep loudly.

*blue*

The sky. "There's nothing I like better than to get in one of them jets and take off straight into the blue."

as *blue* as indigo

as *blue* as Monday morning

as *blue* as the sky

*blue back*

An old time spelling book.

*blue balls*

A venereal disease.

*blue belly*

A policeman.

*bluebird weather*

Sunny, fine weather in winter.

*blue blazes*

A term of comparison or measurement, "hot as blue blazes," "mean as blue blazes," etc.

*blue cough*

An especially bad kind of cough that turns a patient's face blue in one of its onsets. Also name for the whooping cough.

*blue cough of death*

Last stages of consumption.

*blue curls*

An attractive flower usually found in dry open clearings from August to October. A tea made from the leaves and flowers was used as a gargle for sore throat and for diarrhea.

*blue darter*

A kind of hawk.

*blue devils*

Low spirits, the dumps, the mulligrubs, the melancholies. "The blue devils got him so bad he took a rope and went into the barn and hung himself."

*blue-eyed boy*

A favorite. The same as fair-haired boy or white-headed boy.

*blue funk*

A condition of excessively low spirits, melancholia.

*blue gum*

A dangerous kind of Negro. "When I went to arrest that blue gum nigger, he got hold of my hair and bit off two of my fingers, but I drilled him with the cold steel. I went right to a doctor, and he said, 'Lord God, like as not you'll die of the hydrophobia or something. He's poisonous.' But I didn't die."

*blue hen's chicken*

One who is loyal to the authority.

*blue law*

The Sunday law in some states, and in nearly all states having some reference to the keeping of the Sabbath. In the Valley when I was a boy, the Sabbath was supposed to be a day of quiet. Any loud noise was objected to, and in some cases there were laws to back up prohibition of hunting or fishing or showing motion pictures, or doing anything that was pagan and human.

In recent and more sinful days these restraints have been pretty much wiped out.

*blue lightning*

A six-shooter, a pistol.

*blue mass*

A soft dark gum mercury much used by the Valley doctors in the old days as a laxative. Their account books show it to be one of the most popular of medicines. "To Avis Moore — blue mass — 10¢."

*blue Monday*

A work-again day after a restful or social weekend.

*blue moon*

A long time, very seldom. "I haven't seen you in a blue moon."

*blues*

The melancholies, the droopies, low spirits. "I've had the blues all day — and I don't know why."

*blue stocking*

An aristocrat, a proud person. Also a learned or pedantic one.

*bluestone*

A kind of patent medicine salve used as a cure for chancre or gonorrhea.

*bluet*

A tiny wild flower, the earliest to appear in the spring and therefore a prime favorite. When it appears, winter is gone.

*Blue veins* across her nose,  
She'll never wear her wedding clothes.

*Bluff Church*

Famous old church on the banks of the Cape Fear River some twelve miles above Fayetteville. Like Barbecue Church, it was founded by Rev. James Campbell in the 18th century.

*bluing*

A preparation used in laundering to make the linen and cotton "wash" as white as possible. My mother's household list for purchases when my father went to Dunn to "trade" nearly always included bluing.

*blunts*

Bent points or dull edges of a tool. "A file is the best thing to get them hole-digger blunts off with."

*blur-eyed*

Blear-eyed.

*blushes* like a rose*bo*

Fellow, boy, guy. "Hey, bo, don't gimme no back talk."

*boar cat*

A tom cat.

*boar chinch*

A male bedbug, somewhat larger than the female, and a most fearsome creature. According to Uncle Myron Lassiter, these chinchies used to be mighty plentiful in the Valley. And I know they were for a fact. The summer I pitched baseball in Lillington and roomed on the stove-hot third floor of the old Caviness Hotel, these varmints made my nights miserable. Mattress-soaking of kerosene didn't faze them. The old building has long been torn down, and a good riddance. Bedbugs are now pretty much a thing of the past, what with new insect sprays and better sanitation everywhere. But in the old days — oom!

"There were these two young fellows," said Uncle Myron, "who set off after their last week of breaking land to go to Wilmington to have some fun with the fast girls down there, the way boys did in those days. Hee, hee! They had ploughed their stock hard all the week and their daddy said they'd have to walk and let the mules rest. So they did, all dressed up in their Sunday clothes though they were.

"In the old days virgin longleaf timber was everywhere. The pines stood up straight and tall some hundred and more feet high, so it was said. They're all gone now, the sawmills have eaten them away every bit. But in the old days it must have been something to behold. When I was good grown, some of the remnants of these great forests still remained. On our own farm I can remember in the winter how we would cut down these great trees and haul them to the sawmill to make a little money. Some were three and four feet in diameter. And one great tree on our farm down deep in the swamp stood at an amazing height and size. My father measured it one day and found that the circumference of this great pine tree three feet above the ground was twenty-nine feet. Later he sold it for five dollars to a shingle-maker, who cut it down and found it was all grained up and was no good for shingles at all. Suppose it was living there today. The tourists would beat a path to it.

"Well, these boys were walking along and making good time when there came up the ungodliest storm they'd ever seen. A big cloud rose in the west and swept upon them with a terrible lot of wind, thunder and lightning,

and the elements played above their heads among the great trees. And hail began to fall. They were frightened half out of their wits. It seemed to them almost as if the end of the world had come. More than one bolt of lightning hit the tops of the longleaf pines and tore strips out of them down to the ground. And these two fellows made a run for it, but there was no house anywhere. They kept on going down the sandy road as hard as life would let them, and finally they did come to a sort of two-room shack. By this time the night was coming on and the rain was still pouring, and the wind whooshing through the trees, and the lightning flaring all about, with the thunder banging and rolling like a hundred big wagons running away down a rocky hill.

“So the two boys knocked on the door and the man there let them in. He lived there with his wife and worked at the turpentine business. They had only two rooms in the house, one of them the kitchen, so the man and his wife had to sleep in their one bed and the two boys would have to sleep on the floor. They went ahead and had supper, consisting mostly of molasses because, the man said, they had just recently made some fresh syrup and they had a big five-gallon jugful of it. So his wife made down a pallet after supper for the boys, and they all went to sleep — the man and his wife in the bed and the two young fellows on the floor. The boys were about to drowse off when, ‘ting’, something hit one of them in the side, and he grabbed hold of what it was and squeezed it and then he smelled it. And he knew it was one of these boar chinchies. The moon was coming through the window by this time, for the weather had faired off. And he began to see the chinchies on the floor, marching in on them from all sides. He woke up the other fellow and they held a counsel in whispers, and they grabbed the molasses jug and poured a ring of molasses around their pallet to keep the chinchies out. Then they lay down all snug and hunky-dory and slept well. The next morning when the light broke through the window enough for them to see, there they saw a ring of boar chinchies caught in that molasses. And they measured it, and in one place the ring of chinchies was nine inches thick.

“Never were chinchies as bad anywhere in this world,” said Uncle Myron, “as they used to be down there in Cumberland County.”

“Unless it was here in Harnett,” I said.

### *board tree*

A straight tree especially used for lumber. The best board trees were oaks, preferably the white oak.

### *in the same boat*

In the same situation, condition, etc.

### *to be in the boat*

To be lucky, to be in good shape, to be sitting pretty.

Little *boats* should stay near the shore.

*bob*

To hit on the head.

*bobtail and rag tag*

The rabble, the scum of the earth, low-down people.

*bob up*

To appear or return suddenly.

*bobwhite*

A partridge more commonly known from its call. It is rarely called a quail in the Valley. At its first call in the spring we children would often sing out with the old teasing rhyme:

“Old Bob White, are your peas ripe?”

(And then we'd answer for the bird)

“No, not quite.”

“Come over tomorrow night

And we'll all have some.”

*bodacious*

Audacious, outrageous, flamboyant.

*bodaciously*

Completely, entirely, much the same as teetotally. “Bodaciously winded.”

*body*

Stamina, strong wind, stouthearted. “That horse has a lot of body in him.”

Often called “bottom” when applied to horses.

*body-snatcher*

An undertaker, similar to an ambulance chaser.

*bohunking*

To soldier or loaf on the job, to expend one's credit unnecessarily.

*boil down to*

Come to the point, to summarize. “The question boils down to this — are we going to have a democracy in this country or a power game in which big business and the military are in charge.”

*feel like a boiled lobster (or a boiled owl)*

To have a hang-over the morning after, to feel extremely bad physically.

Also to suffer a severe sunburn.

*boiling hot*

Very hot indeed. "You go down there and tell your daddy to come out of that boiling hot sun, he's pulled enough fodder." I went down and told him, and there he was racing away and to my little eyes a giant and powerful man with the sweat showing through his shirt and on his back a white glimmer of salt where his shirt had dried. How I wished that I, too, could grow up and could sweat like that and show salt through my shirt. And some years later I did.

*boil over*

To fly into a rage.

A watched pot never *boils*.

*bold as brass*

To be presumptuous, shameless.

as *bold* as a lion

*bollucks*

Ballocks, testicles.

*boll weevil*

A destructive bug that began to infest the cotton crop in the South — first in Texas and then moving up the east coast. When I was a young man, the pest grew so bad in the Valley that most of the farmers there finally turned to tobacco, peanuts, and of recent days, vegetables. I hear that herbicide discoveries are making possible a cotton comeback. The ballad of the boll weevil became popular. Carl Sandburg, the poet-troubadour, had it as one of his favorite songs.

"The boll weevil say to the farmer,  
'You better leave me alone.  
I done et all yo' cotton.  
Now I'm going to start on yo' corn—  
Gotta have a home, gotta have a home.' "

*bolster*

A long pillow-like headrest common to every bed in the homes of the Valley's best housekeepers. Pillows were used in addition.

*bolt*

To swallow greedily without chewing.

*bolt goods*

Fabric cut and sold from bolts.



*boltings*

The bran and seconds from the flour in the bolting process.

*like a bolt out of the blue*

Instantly, like a flash of lightning.

*to drop a bomb*

Cause excitement, let out devastating news.

*bond servant*

A servant who, in the old days, would sign up to serve a certain number of years in order to pay for his passage across from Europe to America. Flora and Allan MacDonald brought several bond servants to the Valley from Scotland.

The nearer the *bone* the sweeter the meat.

*bone felon*

A carbuncle, usually on the finger or somewhere close to the bone.

*bonehead*

A stupid person.

*bone lazy*

Very lazy.

*bone orchard*

The cemetery.

*the bones*

The dice.

*bag of bones*

An emaciated person, often used in reference to a bony old woman. "Dirksen pulled a boner in discussing Mrs. Luce. He said, 'Don't beat an old bag of bones twice.' "

*make no bones*

To be frank, to have no hesitation in speaking out. "She went up to Durham there and turned whore, and she makes no bones about it."

When an old person's *bones* ache, it is a sign of rain.

*boneset*

A plant common to pastures and wasteland. In late August and September its white flowers can be seen all along the roadside. It is also known as sweating plant. A tea from its leaves or root made a fine tonic and it was good for all kinds of diseases too, including urinary troubles and female disorders. It was said that in the old, old days the doctors made bandages

of the crushed leaves and wrapped them around a broken leg or arm to help it heal better, whence the name.

***bone-tired***

Excessively tired, physically exhausted.

***bone to pick***

A quarrelsome matter, a matter of complaint.

***boneyard***

The cemetery.

***Stede Bonnet***

A pirate who preyed upon commerce at the mouth of the Cape Fear. Not as colorful as Blackbeard (q.v.).

Bless you, bless you, *Bonny Bee*,

Say when will my wedding be?

If it be tomorrow day,

Take your wings and fly away.

(A divination rhyme.)

***booby-hatch***

The insane asylum.

***booby trap***

A scheming woman, a diseased prostitute.

***boodler***

A grafter, a dealer in boodle or stolen goods.

***booger***

To frighten. "Uncle Heck and the others put on their Ku Klux outfits and went down and boogered Reuben Matthews nigh to death."

A louse. "Bring me the fine comb here and let me comb this boy's head for the boogers. He's been scratching all through preaching."

A goblin. Also, a thing, an animal or a person. "What do you reckon that booger did? He pitched the first game with his right hand, and then turned around and pitched the second game with his left, and he won both of them."

***booger man***

The devil. "Behave yourself, children, or the old booger man will be after you."

***the Book***

The Bible, the sacred book, a book used often in the courts and elsewhere for one to hold in swearing to tell the truth. Perhaps the most influential

single volume in all literature. Many people believe that every word was inspired by God, and some include the translations. The devout Valley people were — and some still are — careful never to drop it or put any other book on top of it.

***book-learning***

Education, training. “That fellow’s got book-learning — he knows how to lay off a piece of land.”

***Book of Life***

The mystic book in heaven in which all the records of people on earth are recorded and which will be hauled forth on judgment day. One’s account will be looked up and the penalties or rewards handed out by the great Lord of Heaven accordingly.

***doomsday book***

The book of the dead in which the final judgment for each individual is recorded.

***in my book***

To be in my book is to be in my favor, and not to be in my book is to be in my disfavor.

***take a leaf out of one’s book***

To follow a person’s example, to be guided by another person’s action.

***Books!***

A call by the teacher to the children on the playground to come in and resume their lessons. At old Pleasant Union School, the call was “Books, books, come in to books!” And sometimes a teacher would ring a little hand bell as he sent his call out far and wide. Later when we got a big bell to go in our belfry, the tones of the bell took the place of the teacher’s call, and so the old cry disappeared.

***boomderatum***

Rear, ass, buttocks.

***boondocks***

Back territory, the sticks, areas far from civilization.

***the boot is on the other leg***

The case is reversed, altered, the biter is bit.

***have one’s heart in his boots***

To be frightened half to death, terrified.

***boo-turkey***

An expression of negative emphasis. “He went off without saying boo-turkey

to anybody.”

*booze-blossoms*

Pimples on one's nose from excessive drink.

*be bored for the hollow horn*

A phrase of disparagement, reference to one as being weak-minded. “He makes such a mess of things, he orter be bored for the hollow horn.” Sometimes a misbehaving cow would be diagnosed as having pain or trouble in her horn, and the cow doctor would come and bore a hole and let the “pizen” out.

*born*

A word used for emphasis, such as “a born fool,” “a born idiot,” “a born writer,” etc.

*born-again Christian*

One who has received remission of his sins through conversion “from nature to grace.”

*born and bred in the briar patch*

Equal to any rough treatment or challenge. From Uncle Remus' tar baby story.

*born days*

One's life or the term of existence to date. “In all my born days I never saw such a fool.”

*born with a silver spoon in his mouth*

To be born rich.

*as sure as you are born*

A phrase for emphasis. “I'm going to get that fellow as sure as you're born!”

*to borrow trouble*

Looking ahead apprehensively, worrying with no cause for worry.

better buy than *borrow*

better to beg than *borrow*

If you would know the value of money try to *borrow* it.

The *borrower* is servant to the lender.

*Borrowing* makes sorrowing.

He that goes a-*borrowing* goes a-sorrowing.

*bosom friend*

A body louse.

***botheration***

Bother.

***both sides of the coin***

Common sense judgment.

***both ways for Sunday***

All mixed up.

***bottle nose***

A drunkard's nose.

***bottle up***

To hem in, to enclose, to keep hidden.

***bottom***

Buttocks. Also stamina and character; endurance in a horse. "My buggy horse Bill has got plenty of bottom — he can trot half a day at the time."

He who is at the *bottom* can fall no lower.

***bottom dollar***

One's last dollar.

***bottom falls out***

A cloudburst or tremendously heavy rain. A heavy drop in, say, the stock market.

***bottomless pit***

Hell.

***bottom rail man***

A strong, reliable, enduring man. In making our fences in the old days a good heart rail or "a fat lightwood one" would be preferred as best against rotting.

***on the bounce***

On the go, lively, spasmodic.

***second bounce***

A second try, a re-run.

***bouncy***

Full of high spirits.

***bound***

Constipated. "My bowels are bound on me, Doc, and I need some calomel to clean me out."

Determined. Often used for emphasis as "bound and determined." "I'm

bound and determined to get across the Cape Fear River somehow.”

*I be bound!*

An exclamation.

as *boundless* as the ocean (sea)

*bound to be*

Certainly a fact. “There’s bound to be some way out of here.”

*long bow*

A big guy, an important person. Also an exaggeration, a lie. “When he gets to talking about his fishing experiences, he pulls the long bow.”

*bowels*

Dung, feces. “That child’s bowels look like he’s got worms.”

Animosity. “He’s got no bowels.”

*bow-wow*

Empty talk.

*go to the bow-wows*

To go to the dogs, to become depraved, ruined.

*box*

A coffin.

*box supper (basket supper)*

This was a very popular form of entertainment and money-raising in my neighborhood. The girls would cook delicacies and fix up boxes trimmed in all kinds of ribbons and gay-colored wrappings. At the schoolhouse they would be auctioned off to the highest bidder. What fun we used to have on these occasions! And often two boys who vied for the same girl’s favor would go to it hammer and tongs and run the bids up as long as they could beg or borrow or get anybody to stand by them to pay the bid. In the competition now and then, fights would break out. The winner would have the privilege of eating supper with the girl who provided the box.

*box terrapin*

A species of terrapin with the lower front part of its shell hinged for closing, boxed in. It is common all over the Valley, and how many have I seen squashed on the highways.

*boy*

In southern parlance this usually referred to a Negro boy or man, even if the man is up past middle age. “Hey, boy, come over here and help me with this here trunk.” The term is passing out of favor now that Uncle Sam has got behind the civil rights movement and the deep southern states have

reformed, in some cases even reformed more than the North.

Never send a *boy* to do a man's work.

*boyfriend*

A sweetheart. Of recent days it frequently means a bedfellow.

*Boys* will be boys.

A *boy's will* is the wind's will.

*bozo*

A fellow, a somewhat slow-witted person, a term of derogation.

There is a Negro settlement just over the hill from where I live, and a number of the young boys from there used to come and work with me in the garden or help cut firewood. We had lots of fun spelling the names of things about us, identifyng trees, and doing simple arithmetic sums — or trying to. Too often I was appalled at their ignorance, but impressed with their eagerness.

"Joe, do you know what tree this is?"

"Well-suh-er-maybe it's a dogwood."

"No, this is a maple. And this tree here? This is an oak. How do you spell oak, Tracy?"

"Er-er o-k-e."

"And what grade are you in?"

"Seventh grade, Mr. Paul," was the prideful answer. And so on.

But one thing they all were keen on and quick to learn about — the Ford tractor I had — all except one, a stout muscular boy of fourteen, named Oscar, whom they called Bozo. He was evidently retarded or so it seemed, and stuttered badly. But when a large rock was to be moved or a heavy timber to be lifted, Bozo was the man to do it. And he was proud and rightly so of his bulging muscles. One day when we were breaking land with the tractor and picking up rocks, I half-jokingly asked Bozo if he would like to try his hand at driving the tractor, saying I would help him or one of the boys would.

He shivered and shook his head. The boys laughed loudly and derisively.

"Oh-ua—buh-buh—no-nuh, Mr. Paul," he blubbered. But an eager look on his face showed he wanted to.

"Go ahead, Bozo, try it," I urged. Before either I or any of the boys could help him, he jumped up on the seat, slammed in the clutch and began ploughing, his furrows straight and true as any man's. Then pulling the lifting lever he backed up, grinning joyously, to where we all stood. The boys stared at him in disbelief. All the time we had been using the tractor he had been watching and learning.

From that day a transformation slowly took place in Bozo. He continued to come to work for me in his spare time and soon he was my

most dependable help. Each time he came and drove the tractor I noticed he seemed to be more of his own man and stuttered less.

When I had first met him, I asked whether he wanted me to call him Oscar or Bozo.

P-p-please suh—suh, call me Buh-buh-Bozo, Mr. Paul,” he said.

Now I asked him the same question.

“Call me Oscar, Mr. Paul,” he said easily and strongly.

Time passed. One day I got an engraved invitation from Oscar for his high school graduation. Before he became master of the Ford tractor, he had repeated the third grade two times.

But last week there was a knock at the front door and there stood two well dressed young Negro people. The man was Oscar and the lady his wife. We had a good reunion, talking of the old days and plans ahead.

“You know, Mr. Green,” Oscar said, “when I look back, I think a turning point in my life was when you insisted I drive that tractor. I wanted to run it more than anything. Then when I found out I could — oh me. From then on I had a little bit of confidence in myself and it kept growing, and my stuttering began to go away. I thank you, Mr. Paul, I thank you.”

“No, Oscar, I thank you.”

After he and his bride had gone away I pondered and pondered on the subject of education as it is given forth in our schools and the tumult of professional books, with their measurements, tests, and barbaric terminology.

If Oscar (Bozo) learned much from the tractor, so did I.

*brace up*

Take heart, to keep up one's spirits, strengthen one's willpower.

*brackly*

Brittle.

*brad*

To strike or flatten. “Mess with me and I'll brad your nose for you.”

*brag crop*

A crop of cotton or corn or tobacco which a farmer is very proud of. Also, if it is a small specially fertilized piece, he will say his “brag patch.”

*brag dog*

The leader of the pack.

An idle *brain* is the devil's workshop.

*pick one's brains*

To elicit help, information. “He writes novels, and he's always picking people's brains for ideas and making his notes.”



***bramstone***

Brimstone. "I believe just what the Book says — hell is a burning bramstone, and I don't aim to go there."

***make a branch***

To urinate, usually spoken to a small child.

***branchhead boys***

The common, redneck people usually.

***branch water***

Weak, shiftless, poor white. "The Barnes always were branch water folks."

Natural water as contrasted with soda water.

***brandied peaches***

Peaches pickled in brandy. Very popular among the teetotalers. Even the preachers like them.

***brand-fire new***

Same as brand new.

***brandstone***

Same as brimstone.

***brandy blossom***

A pimple or red spots showing on a heavy drinker's nose.

***brash***

A skin eruption or a rash. "That child's got a brash all over its back and in between its straddle — why don't you take it to Doctor Cicero West and get him to try some of his herbs on it."

***brass***

Bravado, boldness. "That gal Ludie is the brassiest thing alive."

Also means high ranking personages. "Yeh, all the brass welcomed the president."

Money.

***brass knucks***

A brass weapon made with finger holes through it so the fingers can be inserted, and then when the fist is balled up, it becomes a formidable weapon. In ancient days the wrestlers and boxers used lead instead of brass and fought unto the death.

A *brass ring* is good for rheumatism.

as *brave* as a lion

None but the *brave* deserve the fair.

*brawdy*

Raw, bawdy.

as *brazen* as brass

*bread*

Wages, a living. "My bread's down under that stump and I got to dig it out."

*Bread* first and then the bride.

*Bread* is the staff of life.

*Bread* of dependence is bitter.

Whose *bread* I eat, his song I sing.

Charity *bread* is bitter bread.

*Communion bread*

Bread broken in small pieces and eaten with wine in Communion service. According to some believers, the bread actually is transubstantiated into the body of Christ, remembering the words, "This is my body, eat." The wine is supposed to become the blood of Christ. "This is my blood, take, drink."

*Bread and Butter*

A children's game: "Bread and butter,  
Come to supper."

Used as a call to players to come into a room where something has been hid by "It" for them to find, as in "hide the thimble." When a searcher draws near the hidden thimble, or another object chosen instead of the thimble, "It" calls out "You're getting warm," or "cold," if the player is going away from the hidden object.

*bread and butter*

Food, victuals, a wage-earning husband or wife. "Sure I love her, she's my bread and butter."

Don't quarrel with your *bread and butter*.

*bread and butter letter*

A letter of thanks for preceding hospitality. Same as ham and biscuit letter.

*bread and meat*

Also livelihood, support, sustenance.

*bread buttered on both sides*

To be on easy street, to have a fine job.

*know on which side one's bread is buttered*

To look out for number one, to see after one's own advantage.

*bread of life*

A symbolic term for the salvation process in the Christian religion.

*He's eating white bread now.*

Said of a person living at ease and comfort.

*break*

A piece of luck, chance. "Give me a break, will you, fellow, and I'll pay that debt."

To age. "I declare, Miss Sybil Branch has broke the most."

To plough. "No, he ain't here, ma'am—he's down in the low ground breaking land."

To end, to scatter. "Church will break in a few minutes and then you can talk to the preacher."

*breakdown*

A dance, a wild party.

*break down*

To cry or weep.

Sing before *breakfast*, you'll cry before supper.

If you tell your dream before *breakfast*, it won't come true.

*a breaking out*

A rash or sort of eczema. "He had a breaking out all over his face."

*break it off in*

To suddenly reverse one's decision or agreement, to renege on a deal. "In that land deal, old man Partin really broke it off in me and left me holding the bag."

*break one's leg*

To become pregnant while unmarried. Same as to break one's ankle.

In the theatre, "Break a leg" is to wish someone a fine performance.

*break one's pipe*

To die. Same in French—casser sa pipe.

*break the back of*

To get over the most difficult part, over the hump, get by the crisis. "March was here and that warm spell broke the back of old winter."

*break the ice*

To begin a difficult conversation or undertaking.

*break to flinders*

Smash to bits or smithereens.

*break up*

To ruin financially. "The hospitals these days will break any man up if he's in there very long."

To adjourn, to end. "All of a sudden when sister Latham started letting her bosom come undone in the holy dance, old Deacon Gregory went for her to tell her to be 'shamed, and then brother Latham, her husband, took it on himself to interfere with Deacon Gregory and a fight broke out and broke up the meeting."

*make a clean breast of*

Confess in full, state completely.

*breastworks*

A woman's breasts, her bosom.

*breath*

A report, a rumor, whisper. "I never heard a breath of the fact that she at her age was planning to get married."

*breathe*

To let out a secret, tell, let the news out. "I didn't breathe a breath of it, so you can't blame me."

*breathing one's last*

Dying.

What's *bred* in the bone won't come out in the flesh.

*brethern*

Brethren.

*breeder*

A procreant person or animal. "She's a good breeder — already six fine healthy young'uns, and she not thirty years old."

*bresh*

Brush.

*bresh brooms*

Brush brooms. These were usually made of thick dogwood sprouts and bound around by string. These used to be used to sweep yards, front yards especially. A clean, bare yard was a sign of neatness and good husbandry. Grassy lawns in the Valley, when I was a child, were practically unknown.

*Brevity* is the soul of wit.

*briar-patch baby*

An illegitimate baby.

*brick*

A dependable person, one of sterling character. "Jesse Atkins was a real brick — he took on the debts of his divorced wives and paid 'em."

*to drop a brick*

To make a tasteless remark, to upset a meeting by a piece of news or a rough statement.

*brickly*

Brittle. "The limbs of that china tree certainly are brickly; look how the sleet broke everything to pieces."

You can't make *bricks* without straw.

*bridal wreath*

A more common name for spirea with its delicate white spring blossoms.

Happy is the *bride* the sun shines on.

To carry the *bride* over the threshold is to insure good luck.

*Bridegroom*

Jesus, the Lamb of God, the Lord, the Messiah, the Savior. See especially the four gospels and the last chapter of the "Book of Revelation."

Behold, the *Bridegroom* cometh.

*bride of the woods*

The flowering dogwood tree.

*bride's bouquet*

The bridesmaid who catches the bride's thrown bouquet will be the next one to be married.

Three times a *bridesmaid*, but never a bride.

What *bridge* has never been crossed by anybody?

(Riddle: *Bridge* of the nose.)

*bridge tobacco*

Horse manure mixed with scuffed up splinters. A neighbor said his grandfather smoked bridge tobacco a lot. "There was a covered bridge near his home. The hooves crossing the bridge scuffed up woody fibers from the floor and this got mixed with the droppings. He dried it and smoked it."

A *bridle* for the tongue is a fine piece of harness.

*bridle-broke*

First phase of training an animal, especially a horse or mule.

To be tamed down, subdued. "She was wild before she married Tom but now she's bridle-broke."

*put a bridle on your tongue*

To stop gossiping.

*bridle up*

To fire up, to become irritated, to show resentment. "When Dubose said he had read Lynn's little play, Lynn bridled right up and said, 'It's not a little play, it's a full-length play.' "

*brief*

Sick, not up to snuff. "Your Uncle Tom's sort of brief this morning, son, sort of brief."

*bright*

Light colored, reference to a mulatto coloring. "He's a bright boy and jest as sassy as he can be."

*bright and early*

Very early in the morning, near daybreak.

as *bright* as a button

as *bright* as a dollar (or new dollar)

as *bright* as a new penny

as *bright* as a star

as *bright* as a sunbeam

as *bright* as day

as *bright* as gold

as *bright* as sunlight

as *bright* as the sun

*brile*

Broil.

*bring*

To cause an orgasm in lovemaking.

To loosen, to produce the desired effect, to make ready. "This scalding water will bring the hair on that hog."

*bring down the house*

To cause hearty applause, to receive an ovation.

*bring home the bacon*

To get the desired results, success or victory. "You boys are going to play Sanford, and I want you to bring home the bacon."

*"Bringing in the Sheaves"*

A popular big meeting hymn. See "sheaves."

He who *brings* a present finds the door open.

*bring to taw*

Tame.

as *brisk* as fire

If you lend your *britches*, don't cut the buttons off.

Don't get too big for your *britches*.

*to wear the britches*

To be boss. "His wife wears the britches in that house, believe you me."

*caught with the britches down*

To be caught in an embarrassing position or predicament, to be in a helpless situation.

*britchin'*

Diaper.

The part of the harness passing around the rear of the horse or mule and fastened to the shafts or pole to keep the wagon or buggy from pushing up against the animal.

as *brittle* as glass.

*as broad as it's long*

It makes no difference either way. Same as six of one and half a dozen of the other.

as *broad* as the side of a house

Frequently used in reference to an overweight person, usually a woman.

*Broadhuss*

A semi-fictional strong man in the Cape Fear Valley and one with whom all other strong men were to be weakly compared as to muscle power and brawn and fighting powers of tooth and claw. Like the Negro steel driver John Henry and the Northwest giant Paul Bunyan, his fame and size increased with each telling and retelling of his exploits.

His name was Broadhurst, but everybody called him Broadhuss, just the way you might say cornhuss for husk. But there was no "huss" about him. According to a number of old people who still remember him or say they do, he was all might, fiery blood and muscle, and every ounce a man to his six-feet-six and two hundred and forty pounds. And his deeds of strength were equaled by his sprawling living and sensuality and appetite. It was told that seven women once swore bastards to him on the same first Monday at the Court of Common Pleas and Quarter Sessions in the county seat. And a funny thing too, all the babies were girls.

Broadhuss was married to a patient little woman named Polly Oliver, and folks say she didn't weigh more than a hundred pounds. They had one child born to them, a little boy who lived only a few days, and Broadhuss cried like a child at the funeral, they said.

One day Broadhuss ordered Polly to cook him up a snack, for he had to go down to Fayetteville with a load of staves and turpentine. In those days Fayetteville was the main head of river navigation and a big market place for most of the upper Valley people. So that morning he was up before light loading his wagon. And Polly was up the same, cooking the grub he was to take with him. She put it in a tow sack, and when he was ready to ride, she dragged it timidly out to the wagon to him. He reached over and lifted the bag from the ground, shook it and roared out at her—"You don't call this a snack, do you!"

"Yes, Mr. Broadhuss," she piped up all trembling and afraid. "I thought it would be enough." She always called him Mr. Broadhuss.

"And me hungry enough to eat the Lamb of God!" he yelled.

And sitting there on his wagon seat, what did he do but open the bag and devour the half-a-bushel of cornbread and five hog heads she had cooked for him. Then he threw the skull bones at the house, smashing a hole in the weatherboarding, 'twas said, and drove off.

Another time, he hitched his horse to a maple tree in front of the courthouse. The horse gnawed the tree badly, and Broadhuss was fined five dollars to pay for it. After he had paid the fine he walked back to the tree and manhandled it back and forth, big as it was, loosening it in the ground, and finally with his own two hands he pulled it up roots and all. "Lord," said Lawyer Baggett who was passing by, "he's same as a steam stump-puller himself. And why do you do that, Mr. Broadhuss?" he called.

"I paid for it," snarled Broadhuss, "and it's mine to do with what I please." And he carried it off behind the courthouse and threw it into a gulley there where in later years a scaffold was built to hang Nigger Purvis on.

There was another strong man, they said, farther up the Valley by the name of Bradley. This Bradley heard of Broadhuss's exploits and went down to call on him. When he got to the mighty man's house, Broadhuss wasn't at home, but Polly was, and she came to the door in answer to Bradley's



heigho as spry as you please.

"Is this where Mr. Broadhuss lives?" said Bradley.

"Yes," said Polly.

"Well, my name is Bradley, and I claim to be the bull of the woods. I hear that your husband says he can whup anybody."

"I don't know about that," said Polly, "but he's whupped everybody around here."

"Well, is he at home? I want to see him."

"No, he's not at home," said Polly. "He's gone down in the lowgrounds to look for a cow and a calf."

"All right, I'll just set here and wait," said Bradley.

So he sat down on the front steps fanning himself, waiting for the contest-to-be when he was going to cave in Broadhuss's teeth and skull. Purty soon he looked down the road and saw a cloud of dust rising. "What's that, my good woman?" he called to Polly.

Polly looked off and said, "Why, it ain't much of anything, just Mr. Broadhuss coming home."

"He's stirred up a mighty dust," said Bradley.

"Yes, that's the way he travels," said Polly, "always in a hurry." Then she peered a little more closely down the road and said, "Yes, he comes with the cow under one arm and the calf under the other." Bradley jumped up as if he'd been bit by a spreading adder.

"Lord God, is that so!" he said. He looked off and it was so. He balled up his hat and said, "Goodbye, Mrs. Broadhuss. Tell your husband I've been here, but I've gone." And with that he lit a rag going up the road, raising a cloud of dust himself as he went.

Later, so it was said, Broadhuss and Bradley did meet in a brawl at a political rally, and though Bradley put up a great fight, Broadhuss crippled him pretty much for life. George Miller, the local poet, wrote a ballad about it, beginning—

"Oh, come everybody and listen to my song,  
Of the great fight that happened  
Twixt the powerful and the strong.

" 'Twas one Bull Broadhuss on a bright summer day,  
Met old Bud Bradley in a bloody killing fray—  
Fol de rol doll—dollicum do."

Broadhuss lies buried in Little Bethel churchyard in an unmarked grave, his mighty powers stilled in dust now. Little Polly sleeps by his side.

### *broad open daytime*

Full day, in the full light of inquiry.

*brogues*

Brogans, a stout sort of shoe. I remember when I got my first pair of brogans, and was I proud. They had a little brass strip on the toe to protect the shoe from being scuffed out from marble shooting and all kinds of ground games. And how thrilling it was to be able to lace up these brogues and hook the goatskin string around the hooks at the top of the shoes. I know one pair that had a little metal lever lock on it. You would open it and put the shoe on, then press the little handle down and they'd be tight and snug as you please. I don't suppose there's a brass-toed pair of brogans to be found in all North Carolina now.

*broken reed*

A weak person, a poor promise, something not to be depended on.

*broke up*

Upset by grief, deep sorrow. "He was all broke up over the news."

*brong*

Past tense of bring, same as brung.

*broom*

A woman's pudendum. "Stay away from that woman's broom, boy."

A new *broom* sweeps clean.

A new *broom* sweeps clean but the old broom knows the corners.

*jump the broom*

To get married. Usually connotes a sort of shotgun wedding suggesting that the girl is pregnant and the father has been found out and is now forced to marry her.

*broom sage*

Broom sedge or broomstraw. How often have we children been sent to the broomstraw patch to cut straw for making brooms. These we usually put together with a stick in the middle about halfway down and wrapped around with a rawhide string. They made wonderful brooms for sweeping the hearth but were very dangerous before the open fire. Many a child crawling along the floor got a broom into the fire and was badly burnt by it. My brother Hugh had a scarred wrist all his life from being burned so as a crawling baby.

*broomstick marriage*

A pretense marriage. A man and woman living together illegally were said to have a broomstick marriage.

*broose around*

To wander about, to poke around, to take a walk aimlessly.

***Brother, I'm Bobbed***

A young people's game. One player (sometimes two) sits blindfolded in a chair. The other players march around him and one of them now and then bangs him on the head with a book, rolled paper, or even the flat of the hand, whereupon the blindfolded one says, "Brother, I'm bobbed." The leader asks, "Who bobbed you, brother?" Then the blindfolded one tries to guess who of the players has bobbed him. If he guesses correctly, the guilty one takes his place. If not, then the players continue marching and bobbing. Sometimes two blindfolded people sit in chairs back to back. The dialogue occurs between them, each of whom may get a bobbing.

***Brow brinker***

Eye winker

Nose knocker

Mouth mocker

Chin chopper

Cootchy, cootchy, coo!

(A baby tickling rhyme. On the word "coo" the baby gets a tickling under the chin or in his chest or tummy.)

***brown***

Brine. "The way to cyore the leg swelling is to soak that leg in a caig of brown—you know brown like them herring fish came in—that's it, soak it good."

***Brown*** eggs are richer than white eggs.

***I be John Brown!***

A mild expletive.

***brownie***

A penny.

***brown study***

A reverie, an inner concentration.

***bruised blood***

Blood clotted under the skin as in a mashed finger or a bruised spot.

***bruise easy and cry loud***

Over-sensitive person. "Them Jews," said Mr. Mac, "always bruise easy and cry loud."

***bruiser***

A low prize fighter type of person, a roughneck.

***brum***

Broom.

*brung*

Past tense of bring.

*brung up in a barn*

One having bad manners, or careless, hasty action. "I once went to call on the girl who later became my wife, and I was introduced to her father who was sitting by a stove reading his church paper. When I went out of the room I forgot to close the door, and I heard him say, 'Who's been brung up in a barn? Close that door.' "

*Brunswick*

An early lower Cape Fear Valley town and capital. It was founded in 1727 and for many decades was the center of shipping trade for the region. It was captured by the Spaniards in 1748 and destroyed. But the citizens recaptured it, drove the Spaniards out and rebuilt it. After the Revolutionary War it gradually gave way to the new and growing Wilmington only a few miles distant.

The roofless remains of the old Brunswick Church still stand, with its thick walls and solid masonry work as a witness to the town's former importance. Tourists by the thousands come each summer, as well as hundreds in the winter, to see this example of man's effort and his hope.

*brush*

As a matter of little importance. "Uncle Joe volunteered for the army in the Civil War," said Mr. Mac, "and rode away laughing, saying 'I'll be back in a few weeks, this is nothing but a brush.' He was killed at Malvern Hill."

The pubic hair, especially of a female.

Also a fox's tail.

*brush around*

Move around. "She's finally got over the typhoid and's where she can brush around the house."

*brush heap*

A pile of brush for burning, especially in newground cleanups.

*brush-off*

Abrupt dismissal, cold shoulder. "That girl really give Doug the brush-off."

*brush up*

To study a subject prior to examination, to review. "I'm brushing up on my Russian because I'm expecting to go there."

*bub*

A boy, buddy.

A woman's breast. Plural is "bubbies."

*bubble*

A money-making scheme. "When the bubble burst, people started jumping out of the skyscraper windows — Lord, Lord, same as if judgment day had come."

*buck ague*

Same as buck fever, a violent nervousness that often seizes a deer hunter at the appearance of the deer.

*bucket*

A slop jar or chamber pot.

*kick the bucket*

To die.

*coming down in bucketsful*

Description of a heavy rain. Same as raining cats and dogs.

*bucket shop*

An illegitimate business.

*buckeye*

Usually a shrub. I have never seen it large enough to be called a tree. But Messrs. Coker and Totten of the University of North Carolina reported that they found a buckeye in South Carolina 20 feet high and its body 3½ inches in diameter, large enough to be called a tree. A decoction from the bark was used in the old days for ulcers and toothache. A buckeye nut or kernel was often carried in the pocket as a good luck charm. As a boy I carried one for several months but after a spell of what I thought was bad luck I threw it away. Mr. Mac said that his mother used buckeyes as a source of starch for clothes. He had heard from old folks too, he said, that the Indians would pound the kernels into a meal, mix it with beaten corn and water and throw the mush into rivers and creeks. The fish would eat it and get drunk on it and float to the top and then were easy to catch as they floated on the water.

*buck-eyed*

Round-eyed like a rabbit or buck.

*buckle*

To yield to pressure, to bend, to collapse.

*make buckle and tongue meet*

To make accounts square, to make one's outgo not exceed his income, to make a job come out as planned.

*buckle down*

To settle down, to become serious about working or about living.

*buckle-horned*

An animal with horns turned horizontally inward.

*buckle to*

Same as buckle down.

*buck nigger*

Young stalwart Negro man.

*buckra*

A Negro term for a white man, white folks, and sometimes used derogatorily.

*buckskin*

An American soldier during the Revolutionary War, so designated from the deerskin clothes he wore.

*buck teeth*

Protruding upper front teeth.

*Buddha*

The founder of one of the world's great religions—practiced now throughout most of the Orient — in Burma, Sri Lanka, China, India, Indochina, Japan, Korea, Nepal and Tibet. It also has a scattered following in all other nations of the earth. Like the great religions everywhere, it has its different sects. Buddha founded his belief six centuries before the birth of Christ. And like the Christian faith, it is a religion (even a philosophy) of peace, of love among men. But unlike the Christians, the Buddhists practice their faith. The Christian nations of the west, for all their religious claims of faith in and devotion to the teachings of gentle Jesus, have through the ages proved to be among the most warlike, if not the most warlike, people of all history.

For the Buddhist, life is full of suffering (error, pain, ignorance, blindness, etc.) and the way out of it is through the Eightfold Path — right belief, right resolve, right word, right act, right life, right effort, right thinking, right meditation.

Selfish desire for earthly things is the main source of suffering. Therefore give them up or at least put them in proper perspective. In this Buddha and Jesus agree.

As we might expect, Buddha's conception and birth were miraculous. Whereas the Holy Ghost "came down from heaven" and impregnated the virgin Mary, Buddha himself was a spirit dwelling in heaven; looking down on the earth he chose his parents himself — the aristocratic Prince Shuddhodana and his beautiful wife young Princess Maya. Accordingly then as a spirit he descended from heaven and entered Maya's womb. At the moment of conception he was nurtured by a drop of an elixir drawn from an open lotus.

For ten months gestation lasted and during that time the elixir fed him. At the time of delivery Maya held on to the bough of a tree, and the infant emerged from her right side. He was given the name Siddhartha, meaning "the goal reached" and grew up in his father's palace, quite different from the poverty of Bethlehem and Nazareth.

During his youth Siddhartha fulfilled the prophecies made at his birth. He perfected himself in the knowledge, sports and professions of his times. These were known as the 64 arts. A number of miracles took place in connection with him. For example, one day he went to sleep in the shade of a tree, and the sun changed its course in order not to shine on him and awaken him.

Of course we all understand that every religion must have its miracles or it would lack followers.

Some authorities place Buddha's birth in the year 566 B.C. and his death in 486 at the age of 48.

Since my youth I have liked much of Buddha's teaching. For one thing he believed in living by and for one's faith. Jesus believed the truth he taught would be more powerful if he died for it. He must have believed this for by virtue of his ability to perform miracles he could have waved his hand and said to his captors, "You-all boys, be gone from here." Between the two points of view I prefer Buddha's. "Let men live and work for their cause, not die and thus work no more." When I think of the millions of young men — 55,000 in Vietnam, the 700,000 in the Civil War, the 50,000,000 people in the two world wars — I declare Buddha was right and I cry out and on this written page again and again, "Life, not death!"

Every time I see a crucifix with the figure of Jesus hanging there, arms outstretched, head hanging, his two reaching palms with nails driven through them, his crossed pitiful feet nailed likewise and a gaping, blood-lipped hole in his side, I shudder. And I wonder if this symbol in every Catholic church and in most Catholic homes — if this does not prepare and accustom the little viewing children to cruelty and violence, yes, infect them with these evils.

What price such preparation for life!

*budget*

A pack, usually a peddler's pack. "Mr. Berman first came to Chapel Hill with a budget on his back and got his sandwiches at 10¢ apiece to eat. He grew to be one of the richest men in town."

*budgies*

Hiccupstrokes, nervous or irritated condition. "How've you been, Melvin?"  
"Oh nohow, Paul, I've been having the budgies mighty bad lately."

*buds*

A little calf's budding horns, or a young girl's budding breasts.

*buff*

A devotee, a follower. "As part of the Civil War celebration they fought the battle of Manassas over again, and there must have been 10,000 Confederate buffs there looking on. And 'Stonewall Jackson' from Massachusetts fell off his horse in a briar patch and got all scratched up."

*buffalo*

A Confederate soldier who, when his section of the country was overrun by the Yankees and he was captured and took the oath of loyalty, joined the Yankees and fought against his former fellows — such a person was later called a buffalo. I remember once in Avon, N.C., seeing a Bible with some pension papers in it which showed that the same person had got pensions from both the State of North Carolina and the federal government before he died.

*buffaloed*

Stumped, confused. "Lord, that professor had me buffaloed."

*buffing knife*

A knife used in scraping leather.

Mama, Mama, what a *bug* I'll be  
When three young men come a-courting me.  
(A jocular love rhyme.)

A *bug* needn't argue with a chicken.

*bug day*

The 18th of March is known as bug day and was therefore a bad day on which to plant a garden for, it was thought, the bugs would eat the corn. I don't know. I am glad it didn't come a day earlier for that was my birthday.

*bugger bears*

Booger bears, frightful things. "Better watch out for the bugger bears tonight, you children."



***buggy robe***

A robe to keep warm under in riding in a buggy or carriage. A good place for holding your girl's hand on a cold night coming from a box party or schoolbreaking. Present day automobiles offer a better chance for that.

***buggy whip***

A whip, usually with a long straight handle tapering into a flexible lash. These whips were of many kinds and prices and some were very sporty.

***bug in one's ear***

A bit of secret information or advice.

***bug juice***

Whiskey.

***bug out***

To protrude. "There he sat looking at me, his eyes all bugged out."

When *bugs* give a party, they never ask the chickens.

***build a fire under***

To stir up a person, to motivate him to action.

***get the bulge on***

To get an advantage over.

It depends on whose *bull* is gored.

***bullace***

A wild black muscadine grape about the size of a marble. Much the same as the white scuppernong. In late September we used to climb the viney trees here and there and eat and eat until our heads swam. It's hard to find any wild bullaces anywhere in the Valley these days. Their history goes far back. When Amadas and Barlow first reached the shores of North Carolina in 1584, they spoke of the wonderful smell of grapes. We children for lack of jumping ropes used to cut bullace vines and use them with great joy, never once thinking that we were underprivileged because we didn't have a nice woven rope bought from a store. "Bullaces grow sweetest when the vines hang on or climb up pine trees," says my friend Nathan Williams.

***bullbat***

A nighthawk, now all but disappeared from the North Carolina evening skies. I remember how we used to see them flying in their criss-cross patterns in the late afternoon and diving suddenly toward the earth with their vulgar braying cries.

***take a bull by the horns***

Take a difficult job or boldly face up to a matter.

*bull by the tail*

To get hold of a job or be in a situation too hard to handle. Same as bear by the tail.

I wouldn't trust him as far as I could throw a *bull by the tail*.

No trust at all.

*bull calf*

An obstreperous boy.

*bulldog*

A tough fellow, an irritable, angry-minded person.

A cop, a detective.

*Bull Durham*

A once famous roll-your-own cigarette tobacco. How sweet-smelling it was when the little cloth bag in which it was sold was opened! The stringing of these little bags was once common household work, especially in the town of Durham, for elderly people. They could remain at home and do the job.

Many years ago I, in my early pro-labor activities, inquired as to their remuneration and was informed that the pay was 25¢ per thousand bags. I went about trying to get an increase in the wages but was urged almost frantically by these same workers to let well enough alone. I did, for I had already found out that so far as cooperative employers were concerned, I was whistling in the dark.

Anyway this work counted for more than one might think, for it helped even in its small way to build both Duke University and Duke Hospital where the workers' children and theirs after them could receive an education as well as medical treatment which they themselves in poverty had been denied.

The cigarette-making machines and automatic packaging finally pretty much put an end to the Bull Durham smoking tobacco in bags.

When I was a boy, there was a huge sign reared up high in Durham, showing a mighty bull triumphant. At first he had his sexual apparatus buoyantly defined. But churchly and puritan embarrassment caused the now millionaire tobacconists, so I was told, to have him pictorially castrated. I was also told that after that the sign lost much of its advertising appeal.

*bullet*

A keen, go-getter person.

*bullet patching*

A piece of cloth put around a bullet when in the old days it was pushed into a muzzle-loading gun.

A *bullfrog* knows more about rain than the almanac.

***bullhead***

A low road dike to turn water.

***bullheaded***

Stubborn.

***like a bull in a china shop***

Clumsy, awkward, inclined to approach a task without caution.

***bulling***

A cow in heat. I heard the cow lowing and my father said, "The cow's bulling, son, and you've got to take her up to Mr. Martin Matthews' animal."

***Bull in the Ring***

A boy's game of skill and strength. I've never seen girls play it, but maybe with ERA coming on, they will.

The boys form a circle and clasp hands tightly. One of the number, chosen by lot, takes his place in the ring. He wanders about, sometimes pawing the ground and making bullish sounds. Suddenly he flings himself against the ring and tries to break through. If he succeeds, one of the boys who yielded takes his place in the center, and the game proceeds as before. Sometimes a quarrel breaks out between the two boys where the breakthrough occurred, one accusing the other of weakness.

***bull of the woods***

Strong man, bully.

***bullshit***

Nonsense, foolish talk.

***bull thistle***

A thorny field pest. It grows from a thick taproot and its spiny leaves, especially when dried, can be a torment to bare feet. It grows everywhere it gets a chance to grow and has one redeeming feature — beautiful reddish purple flowers. According to a folklore pharmacist friend of mine, a salve or even a tincture from it was once supposed to be good for eczema and other skin irritations.

***bull tongue***

A plow with a special tongue for breaking roots.

***bully***

Fine, excellent, to be praised, good going.

***bully beef***

Canned cornbeef fed to the soldiers in World War I.

*bull yellin*

Bull yearling.

*bully-rag*

To banter, to abuse, to tease. "He bully-ragged me til I was ready to fight."

*bum*

The posterior, the ass.

To beg, to cadge. "First he bummed a ride off of me, and then he bummed cigarettes all the way along."

*to be on the bum*

To be down and out.

*bumbershoot*

An umbrella.

*bumble-foot*

A heavy-footed, awkward person.

*bum-fodder*

Toilet paper.

*bumfuzzled*

Confused, muddled, flustered. "My honest belief is that the president stays bumfuzzled all the time about what to do with this war."

*bump*

To put off, to cancel. "I had a ticket on the plane, but they bumped me for a soldier."

A phrenological term designating an irregularity or protrusion on the skull which showed the character of a person. There were all sorts of bumps according to this now-perished "science," the bump of kindness, of ambition, of anger, etc.

*Bump*

A game. A person would be held up by two others, taking hold of the ankles and wrists, and this person would be swung buttward against another person.

*bumper*

A full big glass, usually of strong drink, also a bumper crop.

*bump into*

To meet by accident. "I bumped into my old war buddy, Tubby Howard, yesterday, and we had good talk about the old days together."

*bump off*

To kill, to shoot, mainly a gangster's term.

***bump on a log***

A good for nothing, a lazy indolent person. "You're just a bump on a log. There you set and won't say nothing."

***get the bum's rush***

To be hurried out unceremoniously and involuntarily.

***bum steer***

Wrong advice, bad guidance.

***bunch***

A crowd, people, group. "When that man started walking on the water there in the millpond at Angier, a whole bunch of folks standing on the dam started yelling and shouting."

***bunchy***

Roly-poly, stout, fat. "She's a bunchy little girl, but her eyes make you think only of them."

***bundle off***

To send away in a hurry.

***bundlesome (bungersome)***

Clumsy, awkward.

***bung***

The anus. Same as bunghole.

***bunk***

To sleep, having sleeping quarters. "Tom Wolfe bunked there in that old room over Eubanks' store."

***bunk with***

To share a bed or room.

***bunny***

The female pudendum.

***burn***

To insult.

To infect with venereal disease. "She was the hottest loving woman a-tall and look how she burnt me."

***burn a hole in one's pocket***

Said of money one is eager to spend.

***burn daylight***

To have a lamp or candle burning during the daytime.

*burn for*

Long for intensely.

*Burning brush* is supposed to bring a rain.

*burning bush*

An erect and sometimes tree-like shrub from six to fourteen feet high of the euonymus family. It is deciduous, but in late summer and early autumn its thick leaves turn a fiery red and therefore its name. We have a big one at our back door and it mixes well with the red of the early autumn sunset. It is found from Carolina to Florida and grows in both sandy and rich moist soils.

The bark and root provided a good laxative, so it was said by old folks in the Valley. In looking at our bush I often think of the burning bush spoken of in the Bible. There is a full account in the third chapter of Exodus which reads—“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here *am* I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy ground. Moreover he said, I *am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.”

And later Jehovah did bring this people unto the land of milk and honey. But he went ahead of them and worked havoc among the inhabitants, mercilessly destroying the above mentioned tribes, every man, woman and innocent child of them. At least the Good Book says he did, and thus he prepared the way for his chosen people, The same sort of thing seems to have happened with the 1948 establishing of Israel, though not with such wholesale killing. In this instance though, England and the United States took the place of Jehovah.

*burn one's fingers*

To come to harm, to make a bad investment.

A *burnt child* dreads the fire.

*burn the breeze*

To ride or run at full speed. Same as burn the wind.

*burn the candle at both ends*

To work early and late, also to indulge in dissipation.

To debauch oneself, to indulge one's sensual appetite to excess.

*burn up*

To cheat. "In that trade he burnt me up by working off that moon-eyed mule on me."

To be embarrassed, irritated, or angry. "The way my date behaved at that dinner burnt me up."

*burn you!*

An imprecation, same as go to hell.

*slow burn*

Smouldering anger.

*burr*

A hanger-on, a pest. "He's a burr under my saddle, that's what he is."

*burr head*

A Negro.

*burr of the ear*

The outer part of the ear. "I hit that fellow in the burr of the ear and I piled him."

*bursting heart*

A shrub often called heart-bursting-with-love.

*bury the hatchet*

To make friends, to forgive each other, cease hostilities.

*bush*

A woman's pubic hair.

*beat about the bush*

To be devious, hypocritical, insincere.

*bush baby*

A bastard, same as bush or woods colt.

*bushed*

To be whipped down, tired, exhausted.

*a bushel and a peck*

A baby rhyme. Usually someone asks a little one: "How much do you love me?" and then is prompted to say:

"A bushel and a peck  
And a hug around the neck."

The hug naturally follows.

*bushel bubby*

A woman with over-large breasts.

*go to the bushes*

To defecate or urinate.

*business*

Body elimination. "Before we start the trip, go do your business."

*business before pleasure*

Everybody's *business* is nobody's business.

*business end*

The main part, the efficient end, the dangerous part, said of a kicking mule in reference to his hind feet. "Stay away from the business end of that mule."

*mind one's own business*

To abstain from meddling, to look after number one.

*buss*

To kiss.

*bust*

A complete failure. "He made a bust of the hardware business there in Wilmington, just like several others before him."

A spree, a wild party. "He went on a bust."

*bust a gut*

To overexert oneself, strain unduly.

*bust a hamestring*

To overdo.

*bust developers*

These developers were of various kinds and once were used by many a shy Valley maiden. Sometimes cajoling bust cream was used in massaging the breast. The most effective aid apparently was the breast pump. The early



Sears-Roebuck catalogues (before the Federal Food and Drug Act) advertised the instrument eloquently for the ladies, declaring "If nature has not favored you with the greatest charm, a symmetrically rounded bosom full and perfect, send for the Princess Bust Developer." Satisfactory results were of course guaranteed or money would be "gladly refunded." This pump had a handle and a rubber cup that fitted over the breast. The suction would pull the breast out and so after much pumping was supposed to produce the desired size — or not. The pump was also used by mothers who had too much milk and some of it had to be drained off.

***busted***

To be broke.

***buster***

A young boy.

***bust head***

Cheap, hard liquor.

***bustle***

A padding enlargement of a woman's skirt over the buttocks, common in the fashions of the late 19th century to add to the sex appeal.

***bust middles***

To plough out the center ridge between crop rows.

***bust up***

Break up of two engaged people or two friends.

***bust wood***

To split wood. "I sure love to bust wood on a cold, frosty morning."

***busy* as a beaver**

***busy* as a bee in a tar bucket**

***busy* as a cat on a hot tin roof**

***busy* as a cat on a marble slab**

***busy* as a hen with one chick**

***busy* as a one-armed paper-hanger with the itch**

***busy* as the devil in a high wind**

***butch (butch up)***

To ruin, make a mess of. Same as botch.

***butt (or butt-end)***

The buttocks.

*butt-cut*

The first bottom cut of a tree.

*butter*

To soft soap, to praise unduly. Same as butter up.

*butter and egg money*

Money made by the housewife from selling butter and eggs. I remember how my Aunt Nanny used to take butter and eggs down to Buie's Creek and accumulate a few dollars which she sent away to foreign missions, for her heart was terribly concerned over the starving children in India—pictures of whom she would see in the Christian Herald. "Why, Paul, it tells in the Herald how the poor things go around gnawing bark off the trees, they're so hungry," she said half-weeping.

*butter and eggs*

A folk name, especially a Negro term, for jonquils.

*butter ball*

A fat, roly-poly person.

*Come, butter, come*

A divination rhyme we used to recite as we churned away at the old "stone" churn—

"Come, butter, come  
For I want some."

*buttercups*

There are several varieties of this lovely flower and all give a cheerful spring welcome with their yellow blossoms. The buttercup grows in meadows and pasture lands everywhere, and its bulbs, if eaten, result in stomach upheavals and heart pressures, so the old folks said.

*butter-fingered*

One who tends to drop things too easily. "I'm all butter-fingered this morning."

*butterflies*

Nervous spasms in one's stomach. "Every time I think of that accident I get butterflies."

*butterfly*

A sissy fellow, homosexual.

If a *butterfly* lights on a lady, she will soon get a new dress of the same color as the butterfly.

***butterfly kiss***

A caress made by two people touching their eyelashes one against the other and blinking.

***butterfly weed***

A rather shy plant that grows rarely more than two feet tall here and there in dry soil. Its orange blossoms are especially attractive to butterflies. My old Negro friend, Uncle Jerry McLean, told me that chewing its root and swallowing the juice was the best medicine "a-tall for snakebite." It was also said to be good for the pleurisy and was often called "pleurisy root." The Indians were said to have used it for a purgative and as a sweat-producer.

***butter molds***

A wooden mold in which butter is packed and made into balls or cakes. I remember how beautiful I used to think the butter was which my mother took from her molds. On top there was a flower design. But often, in hot weather when I would take the butter to Buie's Creek, some two miles away, the flowers would be terribly "wilted" and smeared by the time I got there to deliver to Mr. Upchurch who ran a boarding house.

***butter paddle***

A paddle three to four inches wide with a six-inch blade or more which was used to beat the water out of butter. The paddle was usually made of oak or maple. I can still hear the smart slap of the paddle as my mother made her ball of butter ready.

***butter piggin***

A wooden pan in which butter was paddle-worked.

***butter up***

To flatter unduly and unctuously, like "lathering the victim well before shaving," that is, cheating him.

***butt in***

To interrupt.

***butt into***

To meet incidentally.

***butt off***

Dead end.

***button***

The nose, the face. "He hit him right on the button."

***Button, Button, Who's Got the Button?***

A guessing game. The players seat themselves in a circle. The one who does

the guessing, "It," stands in the center. The button is passed from hand to hand, the purpose of the game being to keep "It" from guessing who has it. As the button is passed around, the players all call out or sing:

"Button, button, how you wander  
From one hand unto the other!  
Is it fair, is it fair  
To keep Mr. (Miss)\_\_\_\_\_standing there?"

"It" touches the hand of the one he thinks has the button. The hand is opened to show whether empty or not. If the guess is correct, the player with the button becomes "It," and the game continues. If empty, the game goes on until a correct guess is made. The "It" who takes longest to locate the button is declared the worst player.

*not to care a button*

Not to care at all.

*buttonhole*

To corner one, to catch hold of a person, to keep him unwillingly for the sake of a conversation or argument.

*button up*

To finish a matter, to conclude. "Well, I guess that buttons things up and we might as well adjourn."

*bust my buttons!*

A mild expletive.

*butt peddler*

A pimp.

*butts* like a ram

*buy*

To bribe. "He bought him, that's how he got him on his side."

Don't *buy* a pig in a poke.

He who *buys* what he doesn't need will need what he cannot buy.

*buzz*

Idle chatter.

*buzzard*

A contemptible person, sometimes used jocularly and affectionately.

"Where have you been all these months, you old buzzard? Golly, I'm glad to see you."

It's unlucky to kill a *buzzard*.

If you see a *buzzard* flying and make a wish and it flaps its wings, the wish will come true.

Fly away *buzzard*, fly away crow,  
Way down South where the wind don't blow.  
(A divination rhyme.)

### *buzzard bait*

An old decrepit horse or mule.

### *buzzard dance*

An awkward dance. Buzzards often when they are on the ground stretch their wings and hop around in an actual dance.

### *buzzard lope*

A loose, awkward manner of running or shuffling along.

### *laid by a buzzard and hatched by the sun*

A term used to describe an illegitimate child.

### *buzzards*

Large black scavenger birds, generally known as turkey buzzards, about the size of a turkey hen and very common in the South. I remember hearing Mr. John Turlington tell of a visit he made to Charleston, South Carolina, about 1909. "I sure was disgusted with that dang town," he said, "for them old turkey buzzards were all about the place, walking in the streets same as people and same like they owned things. And when they wanted to they flew up on tops of the houses and roosted there in their spewing and mess just as ca'm as you please." It used to be against the law in some sections of North Carolina to kill a buzzard. And too it is likely to bring bad luck on the guilty party — as one Austin Honey found out. The story of Austin's tragic and grotesque struggle with these slovenly creatures is still widely told in the Valley.

Austin was from hardy and God-fearing Scotch stock. He ran a small farm and tended his fish traps on the rapids of the river there below Linneyville. And like many a Scotchman in that section he was a stubborn fellow. He had to be to make a living from his few sandy acres and these traps.

He was not only God-fearing and stubborn but miserly and grasping for the pence. It was this last trait more than any other perhaps which led to his downfall. In his haste to get his fish out of the traps and up into town before the other fishermen arrived, he slubbered his work. If he happened to find a catch of red rock or bass or shad floundering in the foaming waters that poured through the slats in his traps, he would haul these fish out and into his sack and toss the unsalable mud cats and suckers carelessly aside. Some of these culls fell on the rocks and spoiled there in the sun.

Uncle Josh, the old colored man who ran the ferry above the falls and

made shad nets in his spare time, said to him, "Mr. Austin, suh, you better clean up them there dead fish. If you don't, you'll like as not start the buzzards to using around here. And everybody excepting the law knows a buzzard be's a plumb dirty mess and tribulation." But Austin didn't listen.

And the great black vultures began to settle down out of the sky and eat the dead stinking fish. From eating the dead ones scattered around they finally began to steal the live ones out of the traps. Then it was that the stingy soul of Austin Honey got fired up.

He was a member of good standing in the Little Bethel Church and sometimes even taught the Sunday school class there. So, remembering his pride of place, he controlled himself and refrained from violent language. But one morning when he came down to the river and found a half dozen of the big ungainly birds sitting around gorged to the gills, their wrinkled bald heads nodding in the sun and his traps completely empty of good fish, he flew into sudden and spontaneous profanity and cursed them to a fare-you-well.

Uncle Josh, sitting on the bank of the river snoozing under a sycamore tree, said to him, "That's mighty pow'ful language you's a-using for a good church member, Mr. Austin, ain't it, suh?"

Austin acknowledged it was and felt properly ashamed. As the days went by the number of buzzards kept increasing, and it looked as if the main means of his livelihood would be destroyed. They had really developed a sweet tooth for the live fish by this time. He went off to the hardware store and bought himself a shotgun on a credit and fired after and around the birds to frighten them. They soon got on to the sham shooting and ignored him. Then he lost his temper and fired in among them, killing several. He should have known better, for the law in those days was stern on such matters.

He was promptly haled into Recorder's Court and fined five dollars for each of the dead birds. He explained his case to the judge. His lawyer pleaded and moved and objected, but no go. The judge was hard-boiled — for he suspected Austin of shortchanging him on a fine shad recently — and so Austin in a rage had to accept the verdict and pay up.

Then he did like many a troubled man before him. He sought refuge in whiskey. Straight across the street to the dispensary he went, and came out an hour later sod-drunk. He began to harangue the air against the judge, and quite a crowd collected around him on the street corner. Finally he began to let out a lot of threats, and so there was nothing to do but lock him up. And he spent the night in jail.

For this scandalous behavior the deacons and elders of Little Bethel Church called him before them and warned him to mend his ways. He told them that if they would keep the buzzards from his traps, he would. They couldn't promise that, so he refused to repent. And they expelled him.

After that Austin quit church and Sunday school altogether. As time

passed he went to the bad with blasphemous language and liquor and scorching profanity. But he never relaxed his stubborn contest with the buzzards, drunk or sober, nor they with him. When he sat up at night, they sat up too. When he slept they robbed him. When he woke they fled from him.

One winter night he staggered to his traps with his lantern to find one of the finest open-mouth bass he'd ever seen being lifted in a buzzard's beak, and he rushed forward with a yell loud enough to wake Uncle Josh in his shack up on the hill. He struck at the buzzard with his lantern, and because he was a little wobbly on his legs from his over-heavy slug of whiskey — in fact he was never sober anymore — he missed the buzzard and went head over heel lantern and all into a deep swirling whirlpool below the falls. He came pretty near drowning, but finally he beat his way down to a willow clump on a little island some several hundred yards below the rapids. And there he stayed, chilled and freezing to the bone until Uncle Josh and the neighbors rescued him.

A few days after this he developed a case of double pneumonia. And by the end of the week it was spoken around among the neighbors that Austin Honey was going to die, and buzzards were the cause.

Then he did a queer thing. He summoned several friends to his bedside. "Folks," he quavered piteously and with heavy breathing — "folks, it looks like they've about done for me — them buzzards I mean." And his glazed sick eyes rested dolorously on their sympathetic faces.

"Yes, Austin," they said, "it's all too bad." Then they sat silent, for they were God-fearing people, and they thought he had summoned them to pray for him that his wickedness might be forgiven and he be made ready to pass over the cold river of death into the promised land. And they were all in a prayerful mood. But never a word about praying did he speak.

"I've got a dying request to make of you," he said hoarsely — "a dying request. And you know that the wishes of the dead are sacred." They nodded agreement that this was so. "Then listen to me," he went on waveringly, "and do what I tell you. When I'm dead, and it won't be long, I want you to take me up on yon hill by the river above my fish traps —" and he pointed with a trembling finger through the window toward the hill in the distance, "and bury me there right on top of it, out in the field space. And I want you to put me in an open coffin, with the lid off. You hear me? Do you?"

"Yes, Austin, we hear you," they said.

"And you'll do what I say!"

They finally agreed. And with burning insistence he made them put their hands on the big Bible and swear to it.

"When you've done that," he went on, "and got me there in that open coffin, I want you to build some hard and fast brickwork up over me and around me — pen me in like. Jake there knows what I mean — the way he

done Mr. Sexton's front yard wall. Tough and strong I want it. But leave cracks between the bricks, you understand me." The ragged breathing of the sick man was touching to hear.

"Yes," said Jake, sadly and gravely, "you want us to sort of dodge the bricks."

"Yeh, dodge 'em, that's what I mean," Austin croaked.

"What in the world you want that for?" said Marvin Whittaker, the blacksmith.

"No matter what I want it for," Austin coughed painfully and even angrily, "I want it. And I want the cracks between them there bricks big enough so you can look through good and see me lying peaceful-like in my coffin."

"I believe his wits is a-wandering," said old Phinny Barlow, the cow doctor.

"Wits!" wheezed Austin. "You fools wait and see." And he beat the bed on either side with his dying, angry fists.

Soon after that Austin died. Jake and his friends, even as they had promised, performed the last sad rites for their dead friend. They placed him in an open coffin on top of the hill. And a good stout interlaced structure of brickwork was built up over and around him.

The next morning when Jake Senter looked up toward the hill he saw a single buzzard sitting on the brick death-house. A little later in the day he noticed a second buzzard had arrived and joined the first, and by sunset time a flock of them was slowly wheeling in the sky. The following morning quite a number of them were wandering around there on top of the hill. Some were sitting on the lattice work and others were poking their heads in through the open spaces between the bricks.

But none of them could get at Austin. None at all. There he lay serene in his open coffin protected from their reach by the stout bricks. All day long more buzzards were arriving from every direction of the horizon's circumference. And early in the morning of the third day the people from town could see the hill literally black with them.

Then the fun really began. Too bad that Austin couldn't see it. A terrific struggle of buzzard muscle and brawn took place against bricks and concrete. Singly and in pairs and in a flock these great black birds would go after Austin. Then they began to fight among themselves for the privilege of another try at him. They beat their old wrinkled heads bloody against the bricks, they wore the feathers away from their rawbony shoulders. And day and night they kept at it. For a fortnight or so the struggle went on, and all the while more buzzards were landing in the scene.

In their way they were just as stubborn as Austin had been in his. They wouldn't give up. And as these days went by they drooped and sickened by the hundreds. Their frustration and disappointment brought them into



nervous prostration and breakdown. They began to die in droves. Also starvation and efforts at mutual cannibalism took toll of them where they carried on their ceaseless and futile toil. All over the hill you could see them scattered like humped bunches of black rags where they lay dead with the dust blowing and sifting over them.

Some said there was no doubt of it at all — Austin Honey soon would have cleaned the birds out of the Cape Fear Valley as well as all of North Carolina maybe and had a final and complete revenge if the wind hadn't changed. But it did, and began to blow down back toward the village. That was too much for decent folks living there. When finally they could stand it no longer the more hardy and self-respecting ones fastened wet vinegar cloths to their noses with clothespins and went up to the top of the hill with shovels and mattocks. They raked away the great piles of dead buzzards, tore down the brickwork, closed up the coffin, dug a grave there on the spot and put Austin reverently and definitely in it.

And any time you go along that road, folks will point out to you the place where Austin Honey was buried long ago — him that had such a fight with the buzzards. And the name of that hill to this day is Buzzard Hill.

*buzzing* like a fly

*buzz saw*

A furiously angry, especially high-tempered person.

*by any manner or means*

By any chance or doing.

*by cracky!*

A mild expletive.

*by craps!*

A mild expletive.

*“Bye Oh Baby Bunting”*

A traditional lullaby still sung by mothers. Bunting is an old word for a woolen coverlet.

“Bye oh Baby Bunting,  
Daddy's gone a-hunting  
To catch a little rabbit skin  
To wrap his Baby Bunting in.”

*by dag!*

A mild expletive.

*bygones*

Something past, a thing to be forgot. “Let bygones be bygones.”

*by grabs!*

A mild expletive.

*by guess and by god*

At random, hit or miss, lacking any care or accurate measurement. "I made that lot gate by guess and by god but it works good."

*by gum!*

A mild expletive.

*by heart*

By rote, to have in one's memory. "He was a smart boy, that Lexie Barnes, he had all the names of all the bones in the body by heart. And he could recite 'em right off and finally got to going so fast he would start dancing to keep up with them, a kind of accompaniment."

*by himself*

Alone, single. "Rorie Matthews lives in that old shack all by himself now that his two sisters have died."

*by hook or crook*

By any means, fair or unfair, overcoming any obstacle.

*by now*

At this moment, at the present. "He's surely got home by now."

*bypath*

A devious way, off the main and honest highway of action. "He was always trying to make money by bypath means."

*by rights*

Justly, one's just deserts. "By rights that boy ought to be in the penitentiary for killing the people in that auto wreck and him drunk."

*by the by*

Incidentally.

*by then*

By that time. "Come back at three o'clock, and he'll be sure to be here by then."

*by the tits of St. Chris!*

A mild oath.

# C

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## *cabbage*

A woman's sexual offerings. "He boiled her cabbage down."

Money, cash, same as spondulicks.

To steal.

## *cabbage head*

A weak-minded person, a fool.

## *cabbage leaf*

Inferior cigar or smoking tobacco.

This universal vegetable often came in for good medicinal use. If a child had a cut in his or her foot or a nail puncture, a wilted cabbage leaf was folded over the wound and wrapped in a cloth. Mothers often used this cabbage leaf doctoring. The practice, like other folk cures and treatments, had come down from 'way, 'way back. If a cabbage leaf was not available, then any sort of large leaf would do — collard, mullein, pokeweed, or Jimson weed. In winter applying a kerosene-wet bandage or greasing with lard or mutton tallow would satisfy.

## *cabbage leaves*

Leaves greased with lard and applied to boils will bring them to a head.

## *caboodle*

The lot, the aggregate amount, the entirety. "He sold out, kit and caboodle."

## *cackle*

Idle talk. Also to gossip, to babble.

## *cackle crate*

A chicken truck.

*cacky*

Human excrement.

*by cacky*

A mild expletive.

*tea caddy*

A kitchen utensil for holding loose tea.

*cadge*

To sponge, to deadbeat, be parasitical.

*cag*

Keg.

*caging*

Cheating, bumming, living off of or living on. "He's caging on us."

*cahoots*

Shady dealings, illegal confederation.

*Cain*

The son of Adam and Eve and a "tiller of the soil." In a quarrel he killed his brother Abel and because of this, as the well-known Bible story has it, God put a curse on him. We have the folk expression "to raise Cain," meaning to create a row, a fight, or raise an unseemly loud rumpus.

The word Cain has a further distinction — or did have — in the minds of many of the religious fundamentalists in the Valley. See "Land of Nod."

*cain't*

Can't.

*cair*

Carry.

*cake*

Easy pickings, profit, delight. "You cannot eat your cake and have it, too."

To stick, to adhere. "The mud's caked to his feet."

*cake together*

Stick together.

*cake turns to dough*

Pretense is shown up. Fine purposes turn out to be nought.

*take the cake*

To succeed in, to win the prize.

*cakes and ale*

Good food, pleasant living. Same as high on the hog.

*calabash*

A kind of squash.

*calaboose*

Prison.

*calamity howler*

A Jeremiah.

*Calamity Jane*

A killjoy, a sour-faced person.

*calamus*

See "sweet flag."

*calamus root*

Tea from the boiled root was used to treat babies with colic.

*calf*

A meek, harmless fellow, a numbskull.

*calf-head*

A dumb fellow, a stupid person.

*calf love*

Adolescent love, same as puppy love.

*calf-rope*

A term used in yielding, surrendering, giving up. Often we boys would wrestle or fight, and the cry would soon go up to call for the calf rope, and finally when the defeated one called out "calf-rope," the struggle was over.

*sound like a dying calf*

A bellowing, guttural sound.

*calico*

A girl, a woman. "He went plumb nuts over that piece of calico that lived 'crost the creek."

*calico queen*

A honky-tonk woman, a sort of bawdy house madam.

*calks*

The turned-up ends of horseshoes to aid in firm footing.

*call*

Named. "That third young'un there is called Sally."

Obligation, right, duty. "He had no call to do me like that."

*call a spade a spade*

Describe or report a happening with unashamed frankness.

*to get the call*

To need to defecate.

The call from on high, to be summoned home to glory, to die.

To get the word from on high to speak the gospel. See "call to preach."

*call down*

Reprimand.

*called home*

Died.

*call in*

To visit incidentally. "While I was in Benson I called in to see Miss Nolie and, old as she was, she was right there at that piano teaching music."

*calling hogs*

A term used in reference to someone who snores loudly in his sleep, much like sawing gourds.

*call it a day*

The end of a day's work, the completion of a job.

*call it square*

To become friends, to wipe out a debt. "Pay me ten dollars and we'll call it square."

*call one's bluff*

To meet a threat unflinchingly, answer a dare, prove another person's weakness.

*call the game*

To umpire, also to stop a game as in a heavy rain. "It was too bad yesterday the ump called the game in the fourth inning. One more inning and we would have won."

*call the turn*

To guess right, to solve a problem.

*call to mind*

Recall, recollect, remember. "I can't call to mind who it was."

*call to preach*

A summons from on high, a divine command to spread the word of God

and bring sinners to repentance. Over the years I have known many preachers who have come and gone in the Valley, and without exception they all declared they became preachers because God had called them. And I must say that almost without exception God showed mighty poor judgment in his selection. I remember the example of Needham Bolin — though the final results as to him, I must agree, were not bad at all.

This Needham was a lonely, plowhandle sort of fellow, timid and of few words indeed. Maybe in his very lonesomeness in the wide fields he felt the need of comfort and so developed some kind of closeness to his God. Anyway, he confided to his sister Lida one night at the table — the two of them lived alone in their little farmhouse after their parents' death — that something strange had happened to him that day as he was plowing. He heard a voice clear as a bell say, "Needham, I want you to preach." Lida looked at him in astonishment, saying he might as well get that wild idea out of his head. It must have been something he et, or maybe he was like that Chester Harmon fellow that thought he heard God saying "Go preach, go preach!" only to find out later that it was Heck Turner's old jackass sounding off.

And to add to Needham's other disabilities he at times stuttered badly. But as the devout people in the Valley say and have said for generations, "The Lord moves in mysterious ways his wonders to perform."

It happened sometime after that that an old Negro woman, who had once been a cotton hoe-hand for Needham's father, died and the Negro preacher came over and invited Needham and Lida to the funeral, saying, "Aunt Hy'cinth loved yo' daddy and she sho' would 'preciate yo' 'tendance." So Needham and his sister went to the funeral in the nearby Negro meeting house. It was a bitterly cold day and a big fire was going in the iron heater in the crowded church. Much to Needham's dismay the preacher came down the aisle, got him by the hand, and the next thing he and Lida knew they were wedged in on the front seat and cut off from the door by an aisle full of Negro mourners and relatives who were crowding in. Caught fast, he sat there in a cold sweat between the congregation and Aunt Hyacinth's black cloth-covered pine coffin.

Then the preacher started his funeral sermon on Aunt Hyacinth and, much to Needham's surprise made it quiet and short. But he wasn't so surprised long, for the reverend explained that there was one with them this day who would speak words of sympathy and praise about the "deceased." Poor timid Needham shuddered where he sat and a great silent groan went up inside him as the preacher pointed to him and called his name. Lida nudged him and whispered that he at least ought to stand up and be recognized. A great "Amen, Brother" sounded from the congregation in urgent expectancy. Needham finally got to his feet and stuttered out a word or two about old Aunt Hyacinth being a fine character and mighty good with a

hoe. Before he could sink back into his seat more loud cries of "Amen" broke out, and others were added. "You tell it, Brother," "Amen," "Listen to the word!"

"Go on, go on," Lida urged, even pushing him from behind. "Say a little bit more — they expect it."

So all bent over and ready to drop down again, Needham managed another word or two, and the amens and hallelujahs began to grow more numerous and loud. The preacher now stepped down from the little pulpit as Needham was taking his seat, got the poor timid fellow by the arm and pulled him firmly out toward the coffin. Then he began clapping his hands and whooping things along in encouragement.

Needham managed to squeeze out a few more words, and the preacher moved to one side out of the way, sat down and left him in charge. The congregation kept calling on him to tell the good news about Aunt Hyacinth. "Preach her on into Abraham's bosom," they pleaded loudly.

The terrific emotional upheaval now going on in Needham caused something to happen. He started talking more freely, and the Negroes started answering him with the 'sponse. And every time he'd weaken they'd roll in with their hallelujahs and amens and sweep him on.

Finally he got going, and soon he was walking the floor, pacing unafraid about the coffin, his eyes flashing, his long plowhandle arms waving like winding blades in a flood of drumming words pouring from his lips.

"You know not the day nor the hour!" he shouted. And the wild 'sponse rolled back from the congregation — "Preach it, brother, preach it up to the gates of glory."

And they say he did. Never had such a funeral service been preached in Cedar Grove Church as Needham Bolin preached that day.

From then on he was a preacher, and one of the best. Some of the older folks said he was about as good as Billy Sunday. He went on the road bringing sinners to Christ. He quit farming in the hot sunlit fields, for he took literally the words of the Biblical preacher who said, "What profit hath a man of all his labor wherein he laboreth under the sun." So he left his farm, and Lida hired a foolish boy, Erse Harmon, to help farm in his stead. The last I heard, Needham was still traveling up and down the Valley as far as Wilmington to the south and east and Greensboro to the north, thundering forth the word of God. Now and then you could hear his hoarse hasseling voice over the Sunday morning radio. But he was getting old and his powers against the Devil and all his works were weakening.

### *calomel*

A purgative cure-all in the old days and of constant and popular use by the Valley doctors then, including Dr. Joe McKay, our family physician.

Of all the fiendish medicines in the world, I as a boy counted calomel



the worst. Sometimes my mother would stare at me and say, "You look kind of peaked today. You need cleaning out, that's what." And then she would destroy me in my tracks where I stood by saying she was going to give me a good dose of calomel. And plead and weep and carry on as I would, it was all in vain. For ultimately I would have to take a horrible teaspoonful of the vomit-sickening white powder and wash it down with water. And then most of the following night and on into the next day I would have to squat with my little behind on the cold chamber pot — or "thunder mug" as we sometimes named it — if the weather was wintry; or if the weather was warm, take up residence in the "garden house" or privy out in the edge of the field. Later would come the delicious mending time when Mother would pet me up, bring me good chicken soup and hang sweetly about me. And then the other children — there were six of us — would stand around and look enviously on, almost reconciled to the time when they too would have to take the wretched stuff, with such exquisite warm attentions to follow. And Mother would always see to it that while the calomel was working we didn't get our feet wet and chilled. "I don't want you to get salivated the way Will Elliott did and have all your teeth fall out," she said.

This Will Elliott was a nearby neighbor and now and then helped us as a hired hand on our farm. He was a handsome young fellow and had the most beautiful white teeth you ever saw. He was very proud of these teeth and used to show them to good effect in his wide entrancing smiles at the girls at church on Sunday, for he had a lot of the giddy creatures looking his way and he enjoyed the admiration of them all with no fancy for any single one in particular, it seemed. Another thing Will had too, whether he was proud of that I don't know, and that was a high temper. When he was rubbed the wrong way or thought he was, he would fly into a passion. Once he was plowing in front of our house, and our Negro tenant, also named Will, Will McLeod, stopped at the well, lifted the gourd dipper and drank from it same as white folks. He was of course supposed to drink straight from the bucket's rim and not touch the gourd. Will Elliott stopped his mule and flew across the field toward the other Will shouting at him, and that Will fled down the road. Our Will grabbed up the gourd dipper which had been contaminated according to his folk belief by the lips of the Negro, threw it on the ground, and stomped it to pieces. He resumed his plowing, his whole form trembling with rage. I, a little fellow, was standing on our front porch and saw it all and, young as I was, I wondered why he did it.

The preceding summer Will Elliott's folks had failed to pull and cure enough fodder for their stock, and one cold winter day it was decided that Will would have to go across the creek some distance to get a supply from old Sheriff Johnson. Now a few nights before this, Will had been out on a randy near Barclaysville and had come home feeling mighty low, so he had taken a big "dose of purgative" to get himself back in shape. He like

others believed mightily in calomel, God help him! He must have taken more than usual, for the explosive stuff really reamed him. For a day or two he lay about, weak as water. But he had strength enough, he felt, to drive across the creek to get some fodder for the stock. The Elliotts had an old steer named Buck, a patient, plodding character who had served the family well. So he hitched Buck to the cart and drove over to Sheriff Johnson's to get the fodder. The day was bitterly cold. A series of heavy sleets had recently fallen, and Middle Prong Creek was swollen high. But he got on across somehow, loaded up the fodder and started home. When he came again to the creek, old Buck rebelled. One trip through that icy water was enough. But Will with his furious temper flailed away on his rawbony back with his whip and finally drove him into it. But half-way through, Buck balked once more and Will gave more of the whip to his poor lacerated stern. Then Buck really bucked. He lay down in the creek with his head and part of his backbone sticking up out of the flowing flood. And beat as Will would, Buck wouldn't stir. Then Will in his fury thought of a diabolical scheme. He took several big bundles of the dry fodder, reached out and piled them carefully on the old steer's back, set fire to them and waited. The dry fodder blazed up in a tremendous flame, and when the searing, livid fire tore into Buck's flesh, the old steer bounced straight up in the air. And out of the deep creek he tore, shooting Will tumbling backwards into the swirling stream.

And there Will was. He was almost drowned, being in his weakened condition. He finally crawled out of the creek and made for home walking. By this time Buck was out of sight on his way to the same place. For a mile or so Will traveled in the freezing wind. When he reached home, he was almost done for. He was so weak his father and mother had to undress him and put him to bed. They put hot jars of water around him, fed him some cornmeal gruel, and so saved him from pneumonia. But that didn't save him from the salivation effects of the calomel. His gums swelled up, and during the next month or so most of his beautiful front teeth fell out.

After that Will was not such a rounder among the girls, and at the next big meeting in the church he went meekly and with snaggle teeth to the mourners' bench and professed religion. From then on, they say, most of his wild temper left him.

He later got some false teeth, married a quiet Valley girl, a rather ugly one, and settled down to making a living as a tenant farmer. He died years ago well-respected and a deacon in the church.

And as Lonnie Cofield, the local wit, said "I reckon through salivation Will Elliott got salvation — not a bad swap at that."

*ca'm* (short a)

Calm.

as *calm* as night

*Farquahar Campbell*

One of the early Scotch emigrants to the Valley. It was said he was knighted by the king and for a while was called Sir Farquahar. He apparently was a canny businessman, for he accumulated much wealth, which was something to do in those 18th century days. He was opposed to violence and the Revolutionary War, and after the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, which he somehow got mixed up in, he was sent as a prisoner to Philadelphia, then to Baltimore. Later he came back to North Carolina, took the oath of allegiance, and once more became a power in the state, serving with distinction in the Legislature. His fine home which used to stand some ten miles from where my folks lived has long ago disappeared — like nearly all the ancient homes. Many a time I have walked in the field where I thought the Campbell house stood, but no relic did I ever find. What first attracted me to this Valley character was his stand against killing.

*Reverend James Campbell*

The most famous of all the early preachers in the Valley. He founded old Barbecue Church where Flora MacDonald and her family worshipped, then Longstreet Church (now enclosed in the Fort Bragg acreage and echoing with the heavy firing of field guns instead of the word of God), and after that Old Bluff Church. A fine monument to him stands in the Bluff Cemetery. He lies in an unmarked grave west across the Cape Fear River on land that once belonged to him.

*camphor*

Spirits of camphor for headache.

*can*

The toilet, commode, the privy. "If you can't perform, get off the can."

Jail, as "in the can."

Ass, arse. "Welfare people sitting on their cans doing nothing and us paying 'em!"

To fire, dismiss. "He got canned at the factory yesterday, and he's out today looking for a job."

To roll a golf ball into the cup. "Yesterday, on the eighteenth green Arnie canned a thirty foot putt, and that was it."

*cancer cure*

A folk herb remedy.

"When I was a young man," said Mr. Mac, as we sat in his millhouse one night while he caught up on his late corn-grinding, "there was an old woman lived in the Rockfish neighborhood named Miss Zua Smith. She

was supposed to be one of the best herb doctors in the whole Cape Fear Valley, and she claimed to have discovered a cure for cancer. Maybe she did. Anyway she used to make tumor or cancer plasters and sell them for fifty cents apiece. A few miles off from her near my daddy's place lived old Archie Norwood, who had a cancer on the side of his face. Doctor John McKay, the father of Dr. Joe, treated him as best he could and said he ought to go to a hospital or somewhere and git it burned off. And even that might do no good, for it was a bad one, mighty bad. But Archie wouldn't go. He went down instead to Miss Zua and got one of her plasters and put it on his face. And when the strength would go out of that he would go get another. I'm a witness to the fact that he was cured. I've seen him at church many a time, and only a little scar showed where the terrible affliction once had been. There are many other old folks walking or riding the highways of the Valley who can testify to the fact of her cures. She would take sheep sorrel, beat the juice out of it on a pewter plate, put it in the sun until it hardened like salve, then mix Achilles' heel root and red-oak bark ashes in with it, pouring in a little flyweed tea to strengthen it, so they said. And then she would add something else, she acknowledged. And what that something else was no one was ever able to find out until she died.

"The doctors round about had got interested in old Zua's cures, and they came many a time to question her. But she would never tell them what the final secret was in her mixtry. She would only smile at them and say in her high voice, 'Stir about ye, men, stir about ye.' When she got down on her deathbed and the news spread, Dr. John invited several doctors up from Fayetteville and down from Raleigh, and they gathered there in her little shack on the bank of the creek. I heard about the gathering and went down to see what would turn up. I was always anxious to collect any folklore I could. The doctors talked and pleaded with her to tell them what the secret ingredient was, but she lay mum as a post looking up at the ceiling and saying nothing. Just before she died, Aunt Lodie Blalock, the sanctified woman who was waiting on her, said Miss Zua told her she had the recipe written down and it was in a tin box somewhere in the house. She herself had seen it once upon a time.

"So forgetting the dying woman on the bed, the doctors got busy ransacking the place. They stirred about all right, as you might say. All up in the loft they went, digging among the newspapers and plunder. They even brought down a little old dusty baby carriage which Zua had bought long years before at a sale when she was engaged to be married, an engagement that never came to anything since her sweetheart, Bull Massingill, a sewing machine agent, ran off with a Croatan girl and on out to the Texas Panhandle.

"At last they found the tin box behind a loose stone in the chimney. They gathered around it like flies around a piece of sugar and opened it.

Sure enough, they found a receipt, or recipe. Dr. John read it out loud. It told the same story of sheep sorrel, pewter plates and Achilles' heel, old yarrow, and the rest of it. Then at the last it said that the final ingredient, and that was the secret one, was to make the patient believe in you.

"Yes, that was the secret of her success. The folks she cured believed she could cure them. Well, you might know the doctors were a lot of disappointed fellows, for that part of the cure was outside their science. They all turned back to the bed to argue with the old woman, saying there must be something else. But there she was lying dead as a wedge with a smile on her lips. One of the young doctors spoke up quick-like and said, 'Look at her smiling. Just like she was glad to have fooled us.'

" 'Yes, she did, she fooled us,' said another.

" 'I wonder if she did after all,' said Dr. John, who was wise in experience and years.

"A young doctor at Duke University to whom I told this story said Miss Zua's herbs might very well have cured skin cancer but not the real carcinoma. 'A cure for that dread killer still remains to be found,' he said, 'and it will be.' Then he asked me if I smoked cigarettes.

" 'A little,' I said.

" 'Then you better quit it,' he said. 'It's my firm belief that cigarette smoking helps cause lung cancer.' Later I did quit. This young doctor was a real pioneer, as time has proved, and I regret I don't have his name."

The game is not worth the *candle*.

Said of any action not worth the trouble.

will neither work nor hold the *candle*

One who is indolent, too lazy to move in either direction.

to burn the *candle* at both ends

To dissipate, to waste one's physical resources.

Never light a *candle* at both ends.

Don't hide a *candle* under a bushel.

*candle an egg*

The practice of testing the soundness of an egg by holding it in front of a lighted candle. "You needn't worry about them eggs. I've candled every one of 'em."

*candleberry*

See "bayberry."

The *candle-maker's* death is dark as anybody's.

*Candlemas Day*

The religious feast celebrated on February 2 commemorating the purification of the Virgin Mary — so-called because candles for the altar or other sacred uses are blessed on that day. It is the same date as groundhog day.

*candles* on a birthday cake

According to tradition, blowing out all the candles on a birthday cake on one breath will make one's wish come true. Other beliefs are that —

Number of times you blow—

Number of years before marrying.

Number of candles left after one blow—

Number of years before you marry.

Get the *candles* lighted before you blow out the match.

*candy*

Sweet doings, an easy job. "Passing that examination is like taking candy from a baby."

*candy-pulling*

A favorite social event. Girls and boys would gather for the occasion and all would participate in the pulling. First, the molasses mixed with the proper amount of water and a bit of salt would be boiled until it came to a thickened, gooey condition. Removed from the fire, it was left to cool enough till it could be handled. Then the pullers with lard or butter-greased hands would divide it into ropes, and couples would work at it till they had it in a chosen shape. Sometimes after pulling it would be flattened out with a roller and cut into small pieces. And ever there were laughter and hearty fun at these pullings. Since the coming of the automobile and the riding out at night this custom along with other like ones has pretty much disappeared.

*can it*

Hush, stop talking. "Aw, can it, will you!"

*canker*

To be gangrenous or corrosive.

*canker weed*

The ragwort.

*canned cow*

Canned milk.

*canned music*

Juke box music, phonograph music.

*cannon*

A pistol or gun.

*cannon fodder*

Formerly the young men of a nation in time of war, but now everybody.

*paddle one's own canoe*

To be self sufficient, to go one's way alone.

*from can see to can't see*

From daylight to dark. "I've snaked logs from can see to can't see, and me and the steers are plumb blowed."

*cant*

To tilt, to lean over. "Watch out or that thing will cant over on you!"

*can take it*

Being able to endure hardship, tough, stout-hearted.

*cantankerous*

Queer, sullen, cranky.

*can't hold a candle to*

Poor in comparison, can't be compared in value, strength, talent, etc.

*can't put your finger on him*

Can't trust him, he is not dependable.

*can't see for looking*

To overlook the obvious.

*can you beat it!*

A mild interjection.

*cap*

The toe of one's shoe. Down in Harnett County we boys used to wear brogans with copper caps on them, and how proud we were of these shoes.

Captain.

*feather in one's cap*

An honor, some signal success.

*thinking cap*

To consider earnestly, seriously, for a long while. "To solve that you'll have to put on your thinking cap."

If the *cap* fits, wear it.

If criticism or commendation is applicable, accept it. Same as if the shoe fits, wear it.

*cape jessamine*

One of the Valley's most favored flowers. Its bloom is almost as unearthly as its sweetness. When I was a boy it was always abundant at funerals. But of late years it has given way pretty much to roses, azaleas, lilies and the like from professional florists for these occasions. But it is widely grown still in people's yards. I always like to go to Manteo in the summer, not only to see and help on "The Lost Colony" play, if needed, but to enjoy the plentiful cape jessamines that perfume the town.

*caper*

A wild party.

A lively, happy dance.

*cut a caper*

Have an angry fit.

*in capital letters*

To be prominent, obvious. "I was there all diked out in my hames and collar, and, boy, they saw me in capital letters."

*capital punishment*

The use of the death penalty for crime. There have been many methods in the past — burning at the stake, throttling, the guillotine, etc.

*cap'n*

The boss man, Mister, sir.

*caps*

Little powder-loaded fittings to be put on the nipple of muzzle-loading guns which the hammers would strike and thus explode and set off the charge of powder.

*captain*

A strong-minded, bossy woman. "John's new mail-order wife sure is a captain and old John walks meek as a mouse."

*cap the climax*

To surpass, to exceed a high limit, the highest point reached. Pretty much the same as cap the stack, to top what has gone before.

*carbolic acid*

Bit of cotton soaked with it was put in an aching hollow tooth for relief.

Wheresoever the *carcass* is there will the buzzards be also.

*card*

A comedian, a funny fellow or person of eccentric manners or appearance.



To score. "He carded a six on that last hole."

*cardinal cloak*

A long, enveloping overcoat.

*cards*

Utensils for carding cotton, pronounced by the old people formerly "cyards," the way the Virginia poor white aristocrats continue to say "gyarden."

*good cards*

A position of strength, a strong playing hand, an advantage. "In our international dealings old Uncle Sam goes in there always with good cards."

*a house of cards*

Any wild or unsafe scheme or proposition, false hopes.

*in the cards*

A true prophecy, a foretelling of facts. "It was in the cards that Adam Clayton Powell should lose his seat in Congress."

*play your cards*

To manage your own affairs, keep your nose out of other people's business and in your own. "Play your cards well, son, and life's a game you'll surely win — win, that is, until the pale white horse comes galloping closer and closer." Also to be astute in timing a move. "Play your cards right and you'll get a good price for your 'bacco."

*card up one's sleeve*

An extra move, something in reserve for use at a decisive moment.

*care*

Worry, responsibility.

*Care* and sorrow turn a black head white.

*Care* killed the cat.

Better take *care* before *care* comes.

I *care* for nobody, no, not I,  
And nobody cares for me.

*Don't care* lives outdoors.

*care a pin*

Care little at all, of little or no interest. "I don't care a pin whether he loves me or not."

*care for*

To love. "He got where he cared for his wife's sister, and all living in the same house, and then the scandal broke and it tore old Summerville Church all to pieces."

*don't care if I do*

To be willing, to say yes, okay. "Have some more peas, Henry." "Don't care if I do."

*careless love*

A coquette, a flirt, also a favorite folklore lament by the same title.

*She cares no more for him than a crow cares for Sunday.*

To have no affectionate feelings at all.

*Carolina tea*

See "yaupon."

*car'n*

Carrion.

You may know a *carpenter* by his chips.

He's not the best *carpenter* that makes the most chips.

The worse the *carpenter* the more the chips.

*to be put on the carpet*

To be reprimanded, placed in a hard situation, be bawled out.

*carpet full of children*

Numerous children.

*carrion*

Putrefied flesh.

Where the *carrion* is there will the buzzards be.

*carrion flower*

See "creeping Charlie," also "gill-o'er-the-ground."

*Carrots* make one's sight keener.

*carrot weed*

See "ragweed."

*carry*

To escort, to travel with. "Are you going to carry Lattie Johnson to the box-party Friday?"

*carry* a chip on one's shoulder

*Carry* no more sail than you have wind for.

*carryings on*

Loud or indecent behavior.

*“Carry Me Back to Ole Virginny”*

With words and music by James Bland, this song was a prime favorite with young folks of my generation. On many a moonlight hayride or summer gathering we would sing this yearning song. Our male quartet often sang it at cornshuckings and schoolbreakings.

“Carry me back to Ole Virginny  
That’s where the cotton and the corn and  
’taters grow,  
There’s where the birds warble sweet  
in the springtime,  
There’s where this old darkey’s heart  
has long’d to go.”

Only Stephen Foster’s “darkey” songs equalled the appeal of this one.

*carry on*

To act or cut up in a boisterous manner.

*carry the ball*

Be reliable, lead.

*carry the mail*

To travel in a hurry and with a purpose.

*carry the news*

To run away, to travel fast.

To gossip.

*carry two rows at the time*

To be especially busy and adept at it, such as picking two rows of cotton or pulling two rows of fodder at the same time.

*car sick*

To be nauseated from riding in an automobile.

*cart before the horse*

To have second things come first, get things out of order and mismanaged.

*cart body*

The wooden body of a cart.

An empty *cart body* rattles most.

*cart off*

To haul or drag off. "You better get a log chain and cart off that cholera-dead hog."

*cartwheel*

To turn a flip.

A silver dollar.

*case*

A love affair. "Joe Johnson and Lilly Cutts have certainly got a case on between them."

Provided, if, when. "You better be ready in case Gab'el blows his horn."

A comic fellow, an eccentric character, an entertaining person. "That Kay Kyser is certainly a case."

*case-hardened*

A toughened person, cynical, hard-hearted.

*case-knife*

A table knife. In our house in the old days, we had two kinds of knives — the case-knife and the butcher knife, and also we had our pocket knives, usually a barlow pocket knife.

*case of*

An infection, an illness. "He's got a case of mumps on."

*get down to cases*

To get down to business, to the facts, come to grips with the matter, get down to brass tacks.

*case worker*

One who does social and welfare work for the government.

*"Casey at the Bat"*

The famous song and poem about the mighty batter.

*"Casey Jones"*

A popular railroad song.

*cashier*

To dismiss, to fire.

*cash in*

To succeed, to collect a bet, to die.

*cash in* one's chips (checks)

To die.

*Cast* down your nets where you are.

*cast iron and double-bolted*

Exceedingly strong, impregnable.

*castor oil bean*

The castor oil bean is good for the garden. It keeps moles away if planted in it.

*cat*

A caterpillar tractor.

A lion, a tiger, a leopard.

Also a fierce woman, a harlot.

To fight, to philander.

*Cat*

A most popular school game, especially among boys. Girls were sometimes allowed to participate if for some reason there were not enough boys available. "Choosing up" was the first order of business. Two leaders or captains would do the choosing. One tossed a bat in the air, the other caught it in a hand clasp. Then the first leader clasped it above his hand and so on with right hand and left hand alternating to the top. The one who got the last hold was allowed first choice for his side. But he must prove it by being able to whirl the bat around his head three times and throw it. Sometimes the distance to be thrown was set, say, five feet or ten feet. The measurement was made by one stride equaling three feet. In our game at the old Pleasant Union school, as often elsewhere in the Valley, we had two bases, designated some fifty to sixty feet apart. The pitcher threw the tra'ball (made of wound old sock and/or stocking threads) at the batter. If he missed it three times, he was out, and the next batter was up. If he hit the ball, an effort would be made by the opposition to grab the ball and hit him with it before he reached the base. Then if the next batter hit the ball, the first player ran back for the home base. If either player was hit by the ball while running, he was out. If the hit ball was caught on a fly or on the first bounce, the batter was out. Second bounces didn't count. With three outs the sides changed. As I remember, we later turned to the regular baseball form with three bases, but we still called the game "cat" or "old cat."

A *cat* came fiddling out of a barn,  
A pair of bagpipes under her arm.  
She could say nothing but "Fiddle-de-dee,  
The mouse has married the bumblebee."

(A nursery rhyme.)

A *cat* has nine lives.

The *cat* in love catches no mice.

A *cat* sitting with his tail to the fire is a sign of bad weather.

A *cat* will always light on his feet.

see like a *cat*

There are more ways than one to skin a *cat*.

Take it slow like the *cat* eating the grindstone.

act like a *cat* in a gale of wind

Act hysterically, foolishly, wildly.

Whenever the *cat* o' the house is black,

The lasses o' lovers will have no lack.

There are more ways of killing a *cat* than by choking her with butter.

He takes to it like a *cat* to water.

looked like a *cat* with cream

*catalog woman*

A wife gotten through an advertising agency. See "mail-order marriage."

*catalpa*

Smoke inhaled from the parched and powdered catalpa leaves, like Jimson leaves, was a good asthma treatment. Also the multitude of worms that feed on the green leaves make good fish bait. Only yesterday I saw an ad in the local paper — "Catalpa worms for sale, twenty-five cents a dozen."

*cat and dog life*

A quarrelsome, fighting kind of existence of married couples.

*cat and mouse game*

To shilly-shally around, to persecute playfully, to use evasive and teasing tactics.

*cat around*

To travel about seeking sexual adventure.

*catawampus*

Wap-sided, twisted.

*catbird*

A rambunctious fellow. "Yeh, he's a catbird all right, and you girls stay away from him." Same as a buck or a rounder.

*catbird seat*

The place of authority, a superior position.

*catbrier*

A specially clawing and cantankerous kind of brier. In the swamps and woods of the South it is also called a bramble.

*cat call*

Derisive whistles or calls as in a theatre or at a political rally.

*catch*

A matrimonially desirable person. "She was the one catch in the neighborhood, and trifling Sam Evans with the big eyes would be the one to get her."

To help bring a baby. "That old woman's caught thirty-four babies I know of."

*catch-all*

A basin or box or receptacle in which all kinds of things, hairpins, chewing gum, matches, nails, tacks, etc., are gathered.

*catch as catch can*

To handle a matter as best one can, to attempt experimentally.

*catch a tartar*

To get hold of something one can't handle. Same as to have a bear, or bull, by the tail.

*catching*

Infectious. "Miss Minty died of a cancer and so did her boy, Jim — which proves it's catching, that's what it does."

*catching* before hanging*catch me up*

Set one right if he's wrong or in error. Also bring one up to date.

*catch on*

To comprehend, to understand.

*catch one's death of cold*

To get a severe chill or illness from over-exposure in bad weather.

*catch oneself up*

To stop oneself before making a faux pas, or take charge of oneself, to stick to a resolution.

*cat eyes*

Knots in timber. Same as cat face.

*cat gut*

Same as Devil's shoestring.

*cat gut scraper*

A fiddler.

*cat-hammed*

Said of a horse with crooked hind legs.

*cathead*

Prison slang for biscuit.

*cat hole*

Usually a small rectangular hole cut in the corner of a door through which a household cat could go and come at night. I heard of one man in my neighborhood who had seven holes cut in his doors, and when someone asked him the reason for this, he said, "Well, I've got a lot of cats and when I say 'scat,' I mean scat."

*cat nap*

A short sleep.

*catnip tea*

A brew made from the herb. It is supposed to make babies rest well, a good sedative.

*like a cat on a hot brick*

Nervous, restless.

*cat o' nine tails*

A vicious whip, used in the old days for punishment of rebellious prisoners on the chain gang especially. These prisoners were often rented out to help build railroads or used by the State to build and care for its own roads, etc. I watched a gang one day — and hearing from a prisoner an incident the day before — my lament followed.

Six shackled figures on the blazing road, swinging their picks, and four behind with shovels. And they sing, and they sing. The white dust hides the blackberries in the hedge and the willow clumps are bent under its weight. Lazy-Lawrence shimmers across the land as far as the eye can see. The sweat pours down. For the ten mourners on the road the only dampness in the world. And it has salt in it. On a stump to the left a guard squats, drowsy, vapid, like a toad. Sleepy, oh, so sleepy! But his rifle keeps alert. Its muzzle threatens. It is an eye and watches. Fall, picks! Heave arms!



I called my mother (hanh),  
 I said my mother (hanh)  
 I mean my mother (hanh),  
 Eigh, Lawd!

On the bankside to the right another guard sits. He also is sleepy. But he is married and has a wife and children. He loves them, he said so. God forgive. The earth shall receive and the heavens mark it. Swing on, O picks, dig for my riding. Roll back the clay, O shovels.

I called my father (hanh),  
 I said my father (hanh), —  
 Tears be planted under and joy ride over.  
 I mean my father (hanh),  
 Eigh, Lawd!

The boy on the end with a moan falls down. His stiffened tongue crushes a dried loam clod. Watchers for the State stand to now. It is their duty. Duty. They poke him in the ribs. They cuff him in the collar. Hell, hell, this ain't no party. I mean no party. He makes no answer. God gives no answer — eigh, Lord. Bantam Wilson is his buddy, with hands like an ape. But his head is up, his face is toward the sun.

I called my moster (hanh),  
 I said my moster (hanh), —

And the willow clumps let forth a barrel. They roll it out and strap him on. God-damn your soul, Bantam. Hold his legs! And now you'll work, and I reckon you'll work. Fifteen — sixteen — seventeen — eighteen. Blood — blood. Sweet earth receive it.

Drink it, keep it till the next harvest.

I mean my moster (hanh),  
 Eigh, Lawd!

Thirty-seven — thirty-eight — thirty-nine. Thirty and nine, so the law declared it. He was a boy — Colonel Jones was a boy — eigh, Lord. Wipe the blood from his fore part, wipe the blood from his rear part. Wipe the pieces of skin from the strap in hand. Oh, his tongue's grown stiffer. His eyes begged at them, speech was in them, speech without sound. And the sun did see it. It made no answer. Lay him in the grass there. Zum — said the fly. For his body was lovely. As a dear God made him. To run by the cabin, to play by the corn fields. Dead as a doornail. Fool, too tender! A little switching, nothing much.

I called my Jesus (hanh),

I said my Jesus (hanh), —

Not much of a beating. Hell, not much.

I mean my Jesus (hanh),

Eigh, Lawd!

*let the cat out of the bag*

To reveal a secret, to give forth in gossip forbidden news.

*Cats* that swim in the ocean all drown.

*a gang of old cats*

A gathering of gossipy old women.

*fighting like cats and dogs*

Usually refers to married couples' tantrums. "They just live like cats and dogs all the time, there ain't no peace in that household — may the Lord have mercy on the poor little children."

*to rain cats and dogs*

To rain hard, bucketfuls.

When the *cat's* away, the mice will play.

*Cat's Cradle*

A string game which used to be very popular. One child holds a piece of string, joined at the ends on his upheld palms and with a single twist taken over each hand. By inserting the middle finger of each hand over the opposite twist he crosses the string from one finger in a special way. Another child takes the string off on his fingers in a different way and then assumes a second form, and so on. Sometimes one child would play the game alone, tying the string and looping it over his own fingers. We had several figures which we used, one, the Cat's Cradle, and then we'd make the Sawmill, catching the end of the string in our teeth and pushing our hands back and forward making a sawing motion with the crossed strings. And also there was another shape that we called "Job's Coffin." The game is well-described in Mrs. Gomme's *Dictionary of American Folklore*. Like most of our games, this game came from England.

*the cat's foot*

An interjection indicating disbelief or disgust.

*cat's pajamas*

An expression of praise or satisfaction, refers to anything very attractive, good, satisfactory.

*cat's paw*

A dupe.

*cat's whiskers*

The real thing, much the same as cat's pajamas.

*cattail*

A common marsh or aquatic plant. Becoming very popular in the lily pools which the better-to-do folks in the Valley of recent years have been building.

*cattle*

The herd, the mob, the crowds of worthless people or the masses.

*catty*

Envious, sharp-tongued, spiteful. "Miss Jones is always speaking catty about people."

*catty-cornered*

Misshapen or angular.

*catty wampus (catawampus)*

Diagonal, somewhat similar to catty-cornered. "Look, you've gone and put that rafter up all catty wampus."

*cat walk*

A narrow path or way. A narrow boardwalk.

*caucus*

A huddle, a get-together, such as a political gathering to discuss important matters.

*caught* like a rat in a trap*get caught*

To become pregnant in error.

*caught flat-footed*

Caught completely unprepared or at a misdeed.

*caught in his own trap*

Much the same as the biter bit, like the man who set a shotgun trap in his henhouse to catch an intruder and then, forgetful of the gun, rushed down when he heard the chickens cackling at night and pulled the door open and was shot by his own gun.

*caught in the act*

Caught with the goods.

*caught short*

A sudden urge to defecate or urinate. Also refers to shortage in one's accounts.

*caul*

Web over a newborn baby's face, supposed to be a sign of good luck and some say that one born with a caul is specially gifted in extrasensory perception. I have not checked with the Parapsychology Department at Duke to see if the belief is part of their curriculum.

*cause why*

The reason. "I know the cause why you don't go to see that gal anymore, she's done kicked you."

*caution*

An odd fellow, a queer duck, an extraordinary show or performance. "That Bernie MacIntosh is a caution how he makes money."

*cave in*

To collapse, to yield, to surrender, to die.

*cave man*

An extra strong man, rough, loud-acting.

*cedar-bird*

A gull, a gypped person. "The sophomores at Chapel Hill make cedar-birds out of the freshmen — sending them to number one Rosemary Street to register, that being in the old days the jailhouse."

*central*

The early village or neighborhood telephone operator, usually a woman.

She was always a good source of local news. In writing a motion picture for Will Rogers out of a James Gould Cozzens novel I once used this lady central to good effect. In opening the story I had the camera hold her in full view as she answered the calls and plugged in the connections. The call was for Dr. Bull, the part Will Rogers played.

"Dr. Bull? No, I don't know where he is," she said more than once. "No, ma'am, I haven't seen him go by on his way to the drugstore yet. He's at home so far as I know. He doesn't answer? You know how he is. No, sir." And so on.

Then the camera goes looking for Dr. Bull — to his home, the barn, his buggy shelter, and so on. Then we hear a man's half-distinct voice lifted in gentle song somewhere offscene. The camera looks around. Presently it fastens its eye on a little narrow building behind the barn — a privy or garden house. It pulls up closer. Yes, Dr. Bull is inside having his morning action no doubt. He is contentedly, even if not quite appropriately, singing "Abide With Me." We wait expectantly for him to come out of the privy. But he fools us. He comes from behind it and is carrying a small armful of firewood. Why this deception? Because the Hayes-Breen censorship office

had ruled that since showing anyone emerging from a privy was censorable in Mississippi and many other states and in England, the bit would be cut out or the film be refused, with resulting financial loss to the studio. Therefore it was not allowed. The letter from the office said, "We suggest the scene be filmed as written up to the point where Rogers comes out of the building. Then change it — let him come from *behind* the little house."

Back then (1934) the sound of a flushed toilet was not even allowed. But today the actor would not only be allowed to come straight out of the privy in full view but the camera would likely go inside with him and maybe take a woman along to help.

That used to be a common Hollywood practice in storytelling. Let the audience enjoy Jean Harlow's sly, immoral doings, say, until just before the end of the play — (It wouldn't do to let her die like Violetta — not in Hollywood) — then bring out the fact that after all she is not what we thought. She is really a good girl. The end of the story proves it.

But of course the psychological effect has already been made, and the Puritan cleaning up "after the train's done gone" is dull and pretty worthless.

But this is away from our telephone central. In the cotton fields we used to sing the old Charles K. Harris tearjerker, with its touching chorus—

"Hello, Central, give me heaven,  
 For my mother's there.  
 You can find her with the angels  
 On the golden stair.  
 She'll be glad it's me who's speaking.  
 Call her, won't you please,  
 For I surely want to tell her  
 We're so lonely here."

Nothing is *certain* but death and taxes.

*certain sure*

Without doubt, absolutely true.

*Certain true*

Black and blue.

Lay me down

And cut me in two—

Really and truly.

(An asseveration rhyme.)

*cess*

Disgust, bad luck, curses. "Bad cess to you, you old woman!"

*cesspool* of the unconscious

The Freudian concept of the unconscious as it has passed into psychiatric

folklore.

*c'est la guerre*

An excuse, that's the way things are. Sometime you win, sometime you lose — "c'est la guerre" or "c'est la vie."

*chafe*

To irritate, to rub the wrong way. "That preacher chafes me to a fare-you-well the way he flings his hands when he's preaching."

*chaff*

Nonsense talk, foolish thinking, unimportant stuff.

no corn without *chaff* and no good without dross

like the *chaff* before the wind

scattered like *chaff* in the wind

The *chaff* shall be separated from the wheat.

*pull the chain*

To betray, to withdraw support suddenly, to wash a thing down the drain. "He pulled the chain on me at the convention, and I was a goner."

*chain gang*

Prisoners usually sentenced to hard labor on the state and county roads and working in gangs. Sometimes in the old days they were hired out to private individuals or corporations to clear land, dig canals and ditches or build railroads. They always wore stripes (striped uniforms) and often chains, and at times some of them could be seen with a heavy eighteen-pound iron ball fastened to one leg. I got up nerve to speak to one of these prisoners once, and he said with something of pride, "Yessuh, boss, I wears the ball and chain 'cause I'se marked 'danjus.' " With present-day and more humane penology the chain gang convicts now wear ordinary working clothes, and when you pass a number of them on the road, cutting bushes, briers and honeysuckles away, you could take them for any group of nice-looking free American boys except for the fact that a guard, usually a fat and stolid middle-aged one, is sitting or standing around with a double-barreled shotgun on his arm.

When the streets of Chapel Hill were being dug up for paving, chain gang convicts were brought in to do the digging. There were no bulldozers in those days. As the prisoners worked they often sang, and I would go out when I could to where they were digging and on the sly try to write down any of their songs I could. Howard Odum, head of the Sociology Department at the University and a devotee of Negro folklore and music as his books show, came out with me one day. He was at that time writing his book,

*Rainbow Round My Shoulder.* We sat on the wall and listened to the singing. One huge black Negro convict would lead away with the call — “Going away from here!” — this being half-sung and half-shouted into the air as the picks were lifted, and then as all the picks came down, the whole group gave the 'sponse “Dig on down!” The rhythm of the piece kept on, never changing, but presently I heard new words coming in. “Listen, Dr. Odum,” I said, “they’re making up a song about us.”

“Is that a fact?” he said joyously. “Yes, I hear it.” And we both out with our notebooks to take it down. It began —

“White men setting on the big rock wall,  
Dig on down!  
White men setting on the big rock wall,  
Going away!  
White men setting on the big rock wall,  
Easy and cool, don’t work a-tall,  
Dig on — going away!  
Eigh Lord!”

### *chain lightning*

Excessive power, activity, swift movements. Also refers to powerful whiskey. “I drunk two drams of that chain lightning and, boy, I was laid out under a shade tree for two days.”

### *chain smoker*

A heavy cigarette smoker, one who lights one cigarette from the burning stub of another.

### *chain up*

To stop, to shut up.

### *chainyman*

Chinaman.

### *chainy-berry*

Chinaberry, a favorite shade tree.

### *chair*

To preside. “He chaired the meeting.”

### *call to the chair*

To appoint a chairman or president.

### *walk around a chair*

A good luck action. If one is having bad luck, say, at a card game and gets up and walks around the chair, this is supposed to change his luck. Sometimes better luck comes by one sitting on his handkerchief.

*chair warmer*

An indolent person.

*walk the chalkline*

To behave discreetly, to mind one's own business, to take care of his P's and Q's.

*chalk up*

To credit, to give recognition to. "St. Peter'll chalk up all them good deeds for you in the hereafter."

*chamber pot*

This was usually of white china or porcelain and kept in the bedroom under the bed for use during the night. In our family it was always spoken of as the mug, for we would have been ashamed to call it by its proper name.

*chamois skin*

For use in ladies' toilet (make-up, face powdering, etc.). These skins were often decorated with crochet work around the edges. They later gave way to powder puffs. There were other uses, even household ones, for the chamois skin — cleaning glass and silverware and lining pockets.

*chance*

A group, an exhibit, a number, a supply, a crop. "That's a nice chance of children you've got there, Billy."

*chance it*

To run the risk, to gamble.

*chancy*

Risky.

There may be a *change* in the mountain.

There may be a change in the sea.

There may be a change in your love.

There is no change in me.

(or There ain't no change in me.)

as *changeable* as a chameleon

*change artist*

A card sharper, a flim-flam man, usually as a quick change artist.

*change one's tune*

To change one's method of talking or thinking or acting.

*change over*

To change one's position. "Change over, you've got your knees in my back,



woman."

*changes*

Dress, suits of clothes. "How many changes you got to take to the big meeting?"

*ring the changes*

To cover all points or to be especially oratorical or poetic.

*chap*

To roughen, to redden. "My hands are chapped with the cold weather the worst."

A boy.

to the end of the *chapter*

Until death, to the final end.

*chapter and verse*

The true authority, the especially authoritative reference.

*charades*

Parlor games usually played with a lot of fun. Most of the charades we used to play had to do with guessing of words or phrases or imitative interpretations of words, sometimes with pencil and paper. Their number is too large to list here.

*charge*

Emotion, passionate feeling, inspiration. "When I'm with that girl, boy, I've got a charge on."

*charge it to the ground*

"Charge it to the ground and let the rain settle it, is that what you want me to do?" said the storekeeper to an unreliable customer.

*charger*

A little measuring contrivance used to measure the charge of powder that went into a muzzle-loading gun, or to measure grain or some other small item.

*Charity* begins at home.

And though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not *charity*, I am nothing.

*Charles River*

An early name for the Cape Fear.

*Charleston* or *Charlestown*

A 17th century town on the lower Cape Fear. It was later deserted, and the founders moved farther south and founded a second Charleston in South

Carolina.

In the 1920's the Charleston was a popular dance.

*Charles Wain*

The great dipper, the constellation of the Great Bear.

*charley horse*

A muscular strain.

*a good time Charlie*

A hail fellow well met, a sport, easy liver, sometimes a ne'er-do-well.

*Charlie man*

Chinaman.

*Mr. Charlie (Uncle Charlie)*

Negro designation for an old-timey segregationist white man.

*charm*

The best possible charm against evil is to carry the left hind foot of a rabbit killed by a redheaded Negro in a graveyard at midnight on Hallowe'en.

*charmer*

A seductive or irresistible person, usually applied to a woman.

*charms*

A woman's breasts. "With them gals showing their charms all around him, that fellow went wild."

*chase one's tail*

To act foolishly, to act to no avail.

*chase yourself*

A command to go away, to leave, to vamoose.

*chassis*

The body, the human figure. "With a chassis like that, Norena had the boys after her hot and heavy."

Whom the Lord loveth he *chasteneth*.

*chatsome*

Talkative.

*chatter* like a parrot

*chatterbox*

A loquacious person.

*chatty*

Intimate, pleasant. "We had a nice chatty time sitting by the fire and parching peanuts."

*chaw*

To chew. Also to embarrass.

*chaw out*

To scold, to bless out.

*chaw over*

To repeat one's words, to consider and then reconsider.

*cheap* as dirt*cheap skate*

A poor and stingy spender, a sorry person.

*cheat*

A darnel or hurtful kind of grass. "I've got so much cheat in my wheat this year I'm in bad shape for flour."

Tares. "Wheat turns to cheat."

*Cheat* me once,  
Shame on thee.

Cheat me twice,  
Shame on me.

(A Quaker wisdom rhyme.)

*cheat the man with the reaping hook*

To recover from a serious illness. Same as cheat the man on the pale horse, cheat the worms, etc.

*check rein*

The overhead rein that keeps a horse's head up high.

*checks* (probably gingham)

Fabric used by housewives especially for their aprons. "When you're in town, get me two yards of checks."

*cheek*

Brass, gall, impudence, dare, braggadocio, insolence.

Posterior, a buttock.

Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right *cheek*, turn him the other also.

*cheek by jowl*

Close together, one on a level with the other.

*cheeks*

Superstition. If your cheeks burn, that's a sign that someone is talking about you. Same as ears burning.

*cheeky*

Insolent.

*cheep*

To gossip, to tattle-tale, to spill a secret, to turn stool-pigeon. Also the noise made by a tiny biddy or bird.

*cheer*

Chair.

Be of good *cheer*.

A *cheerful* wife is the joy of life.

*cheesecake*

A fast turn by a girl in a dance.

*cheese it*

A command to leave, to run, to hurry away, usually clandestinely.

*cheesy*

Grudging, stingy, parsimonious.

*cheewink*

The towhee, the ground robin.

*cherce*

Choice.

lips like *cherries*

*cherry*

A tea made from cherry bark, especially from wild cherry, was one of the best of home remedies. It was good for colds, coughs, and any and every respiratory trouble. Many a time my mother sent my brother Hugh and me, as boys, into the woods to get some wild cherry bark to make tea. We children were "barking" too much around the house at night.

*cherry bounce*

An old-timey drink made by adding cherries, sugar and flavoring spices to hard liquor and left to stand overnight or longer.

Dr. Joe McKay of Buie's Creek gave me the recipe years ago. He was our family doctor and delivered us six Green children, always two years apart.

*Cherry year*

A merry year.

A plum year

A dumb year.

*cherub*

A winged celestial being, especially popular with the Renaissance painters.

Also applied to a darling baby.

*get it off one's chest*

To get rid of a poisonous secret, or guilt. Now a Freudian cliché and an invitation to explosive and violent action.

*hairy chest*

A hairy chest is a sign of extra manhood and physical strength.

*chestnut*

Something too hot to handle, also a stale or outworn tale or joke.

*chesty*

Braggish, boastful.

Don't *chew* your tobacco twice.

*chewing tobacco*

There were many popular brands; among them were Apple, Brown Mule, Black Maria, Bull of the Woods, Beechnut, Drummond, Day's Work, Union Standard, Plum, Peach, Masterpiece, Brown & Williams Sun-cured.

*chew out*

To berate, to scold bitterly, same as chaw out.

*chew the balls off (the ears off)*

To reprimand severely, to scold hotly.

*chew the cud*

To think carefully, to reflect.

*chew the fat*

To give and take in easy going conversation.

*chew the rag*

To talk, argue, gabble. Much the same as chew the fat.

*chew up*

To blister, to bawl out, to chew the ears off, and so on.

*ch'ice*

Choice, an old-timey pronunciation.

*chick (chickabiddy, chicken)*

A girl.

*Chickamy, Chickamy*

This game is the same as Old Witch. One child is the witch, one is the mother, and the rest are the mother's children. The old witch comes hobbling along on a stick and the children cry out, "Here comes old granny hippity-hop. Wonder what she wants." The witch then goes through the pantomime of knocking at the door and the mother calls out, "What do you want?" "I want one of your children." "Which one do you want?" "Any of them." "You can't have them." And then the struggle sets up with the old witch trying to catch one of the children as they string out behind the mother who defends them, and each child that is caught then joins the old witch and helps her try to catch others. And so the game proceeds. There are many variations of this game. The rhyme goes as follows:

"Chickamy, chickamy, croney crow,  
Went to the well to wash my toe.  
When I got there the well was dry.  
What time is it, old witch?  
One o'clock going on to two."

*Chick, chick, chick!*

A call to the chickens, usually at feeding time in the old days when grain was scattered on the ground.

*chicken*

A contest game in which usually boys or young teenagers try out their competitive derring-do. Recently in the paper I read of two boys in the Valley who lay down on the highway daring each other to remain lying there longer than the other. A car came along in the night, ran over them both and killed them.

A girl. See "chick." Also a cowardly person.

You're no *chicken* for all your cheeping.

*chicken feed*

Small change, unimportant matters.

*chicken gizzard*

If a child swallows a chicken gizzard whole, he or she will grow up to be handsome, according to the old belief. Nebo Reardon tried it twice as a boy, but it did him no good. Some folks said it worked backwards with Nebo, for the older he got the homelier he became.

*chicken-hearted*

Cowardly, soft-hearted.

*Chicken in the bread tray*

Peckin' out dough

Come back children

And have a little mo'.

(A recitation rhyme. The first part of this rhyme is in the popular play party song, "Skip to My Lou.")

*O, chicken!*

A mild expletive.

*chicken one day and feathers the next*

To live high one day and low the following day.

*chicken out*

To back down, to turn coward. "I was all set to speak ag'inst spendin' money for a new school fence, but when I saw all them people, I chickened out."

*She's no spring chicken.*

A woman getting on in years.

*Chickens* come home to roost.

Don't count your *chickens* before they're hatched.

*chickweed*

A gardener's early spring curse.

*Chicora Cemetery*

A plot of fenced-off ground near the site of the battle of Averasboro. A number of Southern boys who fell in that battle are buried here, and sometimes a few daughters of the Confederacy meet here to commemorate their sacrifice in the yearned-after Lost Cause. Professor F.H. Page told me he had seen a skull a man ploughed up in the field nearby, and it had a bullet in it.

*chickory*

This is an attractive perennial weed growing anywhere from one to five feet tall with sky blue and sometimes white heads, and scattered along on each side of the highway or in fence jambs or edges of fields. The root was once used as bitter tonic and also as an adulterant for coffee. It was also used in jaundice and liver complaints.

*chief*

The high muckety-muck, the boss, the head man, the president.

*chief cook and bottle washer*

High muckety-muck, the one in authority, the boss. Also, facetiously, the one responsible for the most menial labor.

*chigger*

The Southern red bug, a punishing and infinitesimal mite hardly visible to the naked eye but a most powerful enemy to peace and rest. After walking in the woods in the middle of summer unprotected by an insecticide, one will then spend the night scratching himself. It takes days for the little devils to die and give up their hold.

*child*

A simple-minded person.

The *child* is father of the man.

Spare the rod and spoil the *child*.

Withhold not correction from the *child*.

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless *child*.

A burned *child* dreads the fire.

Train up a *child* in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Every *child* is perfect to its mother.

Don't step over a growing *child*. It will stop growing and remain a dwarf.

It's a wise *child* that knows his own father.

It's a wise *child* that knows his own mother in a bathing suit.

*Children* and fools tell the truth.

*Children* are poor men's riches.

*Children* should be seen and not heard.

*Children* thrive better after they are christened.

Suffer little *children* and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

What *children* hear at home soon flies abroad.

How often would I have gathered thy *children* together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not.

Except ye become as little *children* ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.



*Children's Day*

It used to be a custom at the different churches to have what was called Children's Day. The young children with their teachers would put on an exercise and sing their songs and recite favorite verses. I remember one song we used to sing on Children's Day at the old Pleasant Union Church called "Little Beams of Sunshine," the beams being the children that did the singing — beams just for that one day.

*child's play*

An easy task, a simple matter.

*a chill*

A dull date or morose companion.

as *chill* as death

*chimbley*

Chimney.

*chimbley jamb*

The corner next to the fire.

*chime in*

To join in, speak up, add one's own opinion.

Black within and red without,

Four corners roundabout.

(Riddle. *Chimney*.)

*chimney hook*

An iron rod on a swivel to be pulled out for hanging pots and kettles on and then pushing them back over the fire.

*chimney pole*

A stout pole across the chimney well up over the fire with hooks hanging down for pots and kettles.

*chimney sweeps*

Chimney swallows.

*stick and dirt chimney*

In the old days in Harnett County as a boy I used to see many stick and dirt chimneys. A wooden frame would be built up above the fireplace height outside the house to what was called a shoulder, and then dirt and rock would be filled in (and sometimes mortar mixed in with it to hold it), and then a pen of split wood would be built atop of that which might be called the throat of the chimney, and this would be daubed with clay. Sometimes the fire would reach up to this pen of wood and set the thing on fire, perhaps burning

down the house.

*chin*

To talk, to gossip.

An athletic exercise, lifting oneself, chin high, on a horizontal bar.

*not for all the tea in China*

An absolute refusal, certainly not, never.

*chinaberry trees*

The old folks say, Mr. Mac once told me, that chinaberry trees planted among orchards keep worms and rot away from the fruit trees. Also oil from chinaberry seeds will kill fleas on dogs and vermin generally. A soap made from these berries used to be called "poor man's soap." But the best use of the berries was to make wash for sore eyes, or ointment for scald-head.

*Chinaman's chance*

No chance at all, a hopeless possibility.

*chinch*

A bed bug. See "boar chinch."

*Chin cherry*

Moo merry

Nose nappie

Eye winkie

Brow brinkie

Cock up jinkie.

(A baby tickling rhyme.)

On the last line the little baby is tickled under his chin.

*chinchy*

Stingy, niggardly.

*Chinese Tag*

One kind of that most popular game, tag. Chinese Tag begins with a group of players designating a special spot or place or tree to race for. They set out to reach the goal, and the last one arriving is "It." He must chase the others until he tags one of them. And this game is played so that wherever the player touches the one tagged, the tagged one must put his hand to that spot on his body which was touched. If he happens to be tagged on the knee, then he has to put his hand on his knee and, while running to tag someone else, run in that position. He is not permitted to move his hand until he has succeeded in tagging one of the other players who then becomes "It" and takes the posture required by placing his hand on his body where he has been tagged.

***chink***

A crack.

Also to daub, to plaster. "He chinked his cracks with that old hearth clayey stuff and it just wouldn't hold."

A little *chink* lets in much light.

***chin music***

Windy oratory, idle talk and gossip.

***chinning***

Talking, tattle-telling.

***chinquapin***

Tea from the bark of this bush or tree was used for intermittent fever and chills. The wood is also mighty tough. It makes good fence posts and lasts for generations in the ground. There's many a fence post of it still standing in Little Bethel, though because of the blight the tree is getting scarcer and scarcer. Young girls used to make nice necklaces out of the chinquapin nuts.

***chin up***

To be brave, to bear up under difficulties, not to give in.

***chip***

To cut boxes in pine trees for turpentine resin to seep into.

A child.

***a blue chip***

An important argument, a final reason for action, a compelling bit of logic.

***chip in***

To share the expense, to add a part.

***chip off the old block***

Like father, like son.

***carry a chip on one's shoulder***

To be easily angered, high tempered, irascible.

***chippy***

A girl of loose morals.

To feel good. "The sun is shining, the mockingbirds are singing, and I am chippy to a fare-ye-well."

***chips are down***

The showdown, the crisis test.

*The gap in the ax shows in the chips.*

Inheritance will show, guilt leaves its mark on the guilty, blood will tell.

*chirpy*

Cheerful, in good spirits.

*chirrup*

Noise made by the lips to urge a horse or team on.

*chisel*

To cheat. "He'll chisel you out of your eyeballs if you'll let him."

*chist*

Chest.

*chit*

A little child, a pert young girl. Also an I.O.U. "Mr. Daniels, traveling all over North Carolina, used to hand out chits wherever he went, and that's where Jonathan got the habit," Thad said.

*chit-chat*

Chaffy, light and gossipy conversation.

*chitlins*

The intestines of hogs. Cleaned, fried and chopped up, they are supposed to be a Southern delicacy.

*chitter*

To shiver, to tremble.

*chock*

To prop, to put a stone or piece of wood against a vehicle wheel to keep it from moving.

*chock full*

Completely full, brim full, overrunning.

*chock up*

To chalk up, to credit, to charge.

*Choeffington*

An ancient hamlet in Cumberland County which faded away about the middle of the 18th century or a little later when the courthouse was moved to Campbelltown, which later became a part of Cross Creek and then was renamed Fayetteville in honor of LaFayette and his visit there in 1824. I have searched the field where Choeffington once stood but no remnant of its existence could I find. According to records, it once promised much. There was an ordinary there, a silversmith, and a number of "places of business."

Also a pillory and a whipping post for criminals. According to John A. Oates in his encyclopedic "The Story of Fayetteville," there was a race course in the village also.

You pays your money and you takes your *choice*.  
It's as you would have it. To do as one will.

There is small *choice* in rotten apples.

*choke off*

Put a stop to, get rid of a tiresome person or subject.

*choker*

A huge cravat.

A string of close-fitting beads.

*cholery*

Cholera. This disease used to be a curse to the farmers' hogs. How often I've seen my father's face grow long and sad when the cholera had broken out among his "fattening hogs."

*cholery morbis*

Cholera morbus.

*chomp (champ)* at the bit

To be restless, uneasy, anxious to go.

*Choose* your love and then love your choice.

*choosy*

Fastidious.

*chop-logic*

An especially argumentative person.

*chopped*

Chapped.

*chopper*

A hand-edged blow.

*chops*

Lips, mouth.

*to lick one's chops*

To gloat, to drool with satisfaction.

*Chop the Poplar*

A game. This is very much like "Clap hands." Two players sit facing each other, so near that the knees almost touch. Then each one slaps both his

hands on his knees, strikes them together, next hits the other's right hand with his, claps his own hands together, strikes the other player's left hand with his left, claps his own again, then strikes both palms against those of the other, claps his own hands, and finally claps both hands upon his knees. So it is described by Paul Brewster. This action can be begun rather slowly and then increase in tempo until the thing blows up. Often we would chant an accompanying rhyme with increased tempo:

“Peas, porridge hot.  
Peas, porridge cold.  
Peas, porridge in the pot  
Nine days old.”

Many are called but few *chosen*.

*chouse* (chowse)

To cheat. This is a word early in my remembrance. My father used to use it relative to a shady dealer or a close-fisted trader. He didn't know where it came from. He only knew it meant to cheat. “Old man John Allen is a close trader and he'll chouse your eyes out if you don't watch him.” According to something I read, this word is originally a Turkish name. A Turkish ambassador to London named Chouse became well known for his shady dealings, and so his name passed on into currency in a way he never intended it.

*chow*

Victuals, grub, food.

*Christ!*

Christ! Christ A'mighty! Jesus! Jesus Christ! and so on. A most common expletive.

*Christian Science*

A religious belief which is not science at all. It was founded by Mary Baker Eddy in 1875, and it holds that man is a spiritual idea of God and, therefore, is not in reality subject to the evils and causations of the world. Therefore, pain, sickness, sin, sorrow and death are only figments of man's misguided thinking. Naturally, one might ask if man is an imitation of God's perfection, how then can he err in his thinking. I've had several friends who were Christian Scientists who died horrible deaths of cancer — cancer which earlier might have been amenable to surgery, but left to go so long neither Christian Science nor medical science could save them.

*Christmas*

Liquor.

*Christmas* comes but once a year.

I wouldn't have him (her, it) off a *Christmas* tree. (as a gift.)

*Christmas bells*

See "yucca."

*Christmas box*

A box or receptacle for receiving Christmas contributions for the poor.

*Christmas cards*

Cards of greetings and best wishes, usually of a religious nature, sent at Christmastime.

*Christmas club moss*

Ground cedar.

*Christmas decoration*

Usually holly with berries is preferred, also cedar and mistletoe.

*Old Christmas*

The twelfth of January. On this day cows, according to old tradition, kneel in their stalls in salutation to the baby Jesus.

Roosters crow at midnight on Old *Christmas*.

*Christmas serenading*

With the coming of motion pictures, the automobile and television this custom has pretty much died out. When I was young, come Christmas Eve night, we neighborhood young people would get together and go serenading from house to house. We would dress up in all kinds of fantastic costumes. Some of the girls would put on boys' clothes and the boys, girls' clothes. And we would smear our faces with pokeberry stain or streaks of soot and in some instances completely blacken up and pretend to be "niggers." Some of us too would put on homemade masks or dough faces, as we called them, and wear beards of moss, and mustaches made of cornsilks or rabbit tobacco. And the noise we made was as outlandish as our appearances. We blew on guano trumpets, beat tin pans, rang cowbells, whistled and shrieked as we marched back and forth in front of a house. If no fences or bad dogs hindered, we marched around the house. Now and then our rambunctious mood gave way to carol singing, and our voices, too often rough and out of tune, would be raised in "Silent Night" or "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." And often too we would be invited inside by a kindly farmer and his wife and would fill up on popcorn, peanuts and drinks of harmless cider. Many future marriages came out of these serenadings. See also "John Kuners."

*Christmassing*

To go serenading, to have holiday good times.

*Christmassy*

Festive.

*Christmas trees*

Don't leave Christmas trees up after New Year's Day, or you will have bad luck.

It is now the custom in almost every home to have a brightly lighted and decorated Christmas tree at Christmas time. This is a later-years custom. When I was a boy, the tree was usually a community one and of rather large size, say, ten to fifteen feet high. In my neighborhood holly was abundant and was preferred to cedar. We always had our tree in the church, and in the afternoon of Christmas Eve the neighbors would bring their presents and hang them on the tree. Someone would be left to guard the tree. Then after supper the people would return. Usually there would be Christmas music and singing — "Away in a Manger," "Deck the Halls," and so on first, then the gifts would be called off (the names of recipients announced and gifts given).

*chub*

A bass fish.

*chubby*

Dumpy, short, fat, roly-poly, stout. "He sure loves that chubby wife of his'n."

*chuck*

To quit, to wipe one's hands of.

To throw out, to discard.

Loose materials, plunder, worthless baggage.

Food, grub.

*Chuckaluck*

A dice game.

Chuckaluck—the more you lay down  
The less you pick up.

*chuck it*

Forget it.

*chuck out*

To throw out, to eject forcibly.

*chuff*

Chaff, nonsense talk.



*chuffy*

Puffed out like a bird in the cold, or with cheeks puffed out.

*chum*

A partner, a pal, best friend.

*chumming*

Living together, or spending time together as friends.

*chump*

Bozo, fool, fellow, dolt.

*chune*

Tune.

*chunk*

To throw.

To get rid of, to quit. "I got so tar'd of the thing I decided to chunk the whole business."

A lightwood knot or piece of wood.

*chunk of fire*

The burning end of a chunk of wood. Fire long ago was borrowed by neighbors, one from the other, and carried in chunks. "A chunk of fire fell out and rolled on the floor and set the house afire."

*chunk up the fire*

To punch up, to replenish.

*chunky*

Stout, fat. "He's a sort of chunky fellow, and he's allus laughing."

*Church*

A children's game. Children sit around trying to be solemn, while one is the preacher until it all ends in squeals of laughter and turmoil. Then another game is introduced.

*the church*

A finger rhyme.

This is the church.

This is the steeple.

Lift up the roof

And see all the people.

The fingers are locked together downward toward the palms, and at the second line the index fingers are pointed upward and joined at the tips to form a steeple. On the last two lines the hands are turned with their backs

down and fingers upward.

The wind blows strongest around a *church*.

*church-house*

The church building.

*churchified*

Stiff, unbending, sternly orthodox.

*Church of God*

An emotional evangelical sect splitting into other sects, as the Only Church of God, then the Only True Church of God.

*church work*

Slow work.

*churchy*

Same as churchified.

*churchyard*

The cemetery.

*churchyard cough*

Tuberculosis cough, or cough from heavy cigarette smoking.

*churn*

Churn.

Big at the bottom, little at the top,  
Something in the middle goes flippity flop.  
(Riddle. *A churn.*)

*churn-dasher*

A wooden staff, usually of oak or hickory, with two cross paddles, or a disc with holes bored in it, attached to one end of the staff or handle of the churn. This handle comes up through a circular covering with a hole in it and is used to move up and down to make the butter come.

*churn head*

A hardheaded horse or mule of poor intelligence.

much *churning* and no butter

*churring*

The voice made by a partridge's wings on sudden rising.

*cinch*

An easy job, an easy matter, easy pickings.

Conclude a matter, to win, to get possession of. "After trying a dozen

different things, he finally cinched the job with the undertaker."

### *Cinderella*

A rope-skipping rhyme.

Cinderella dressed in yellow  
Went uptown with a green umbrella.  
She walked so slow,  
She met her beau,  
He took her to the picture show.  
How many kisses did he give her?

And then the turning of the rope goes on, counting until there is a miss,  
and then someone else takes over skipping.

### *"Cindy"*

A favorite fiddling piece and song.

### *cipher*

To figure, to work arithmetic numbers. "That Norton Spence boy has got  
so he can cipher right up to old man Bill Byrd."

### *Circle Base*

A game, same as prison base.

### *to run in a circle*

To act uselessly, to do work that amounts to nothing, to hop up and down  
in the same foot tracks.

### *circles*

Puffed bags under one's eyes. "For weeks after she married that fellow she  
had great circles under her eyes."

### *circumbendibus*

Round about, circuitous.

### *circumstance*

A word of comparison. "Talk about Henry Spears being stingy, he ain't  
a circumstance to John Allen Matthews."

*Circumstances* alter cases.

### *in good circumstances*

To be well to do. "Henry Spears is in good circumstances, I'll tell you that."

### *circus*

A laughable hullabaloo, an outlandish display. "The whole thing turned  
into a circus — Baltimore beat 'em 16 to 1."

*cirrhosis* of the liver

See “roaches of the liver.”

*citreen*

Citron.

A *city* on a hill cannot be hid.

*city slicker*

Suspected as a specially tricky person as contrasted with rural honest John.

*civil*

Polite, kind. “She hasn’t got a civil answer in her whole makeup.”

*civvies*

Civilian clothes in contrast with military dress.

*clabber*

Curdled milk.

*clabber grass*

See “bedstraw.”

*clack*

Chatter, gossip, woman’s loud talking.

*clacking*

Gossiping, loud talking. “As soon as them women got together they went to clacking like forty.”

*claim jumper*

An interloper, a successful rival in love.

*clam*

Past tense of climb.

To grow secretive, to refuse to talk, to plead the fifth amendment.

*tight as a clam*

Secretive, non-communicative.

as *clammy* as death

*clap*

Gonorrhea. “I’ve had the clap seven times,” he said, “and it’s no worse than a bad cold.”

*clap eyes on*

To see, to recognize. “It’s been a year, man, since I clapped eyes on you.”

*clap happy*

Hasty.

*like a clap of thunder*

Instantaneously, with devastating loudness, powerfully. "The news of his mother's death hit him like a clap of thunder."

*clapper*

A person's tongue.

His tongue moved like a *clapper* in a cowbell.

*Clarendon River*

An early name for the Cape Fear.

*claret*

Blood.

*clasp knife*

A large pocket knife.

*class*

Style, fashion, merit. "Old Clark Gable's got class, yes ma'am."

*claw*

A hand.

*claw hammer coat*

A coat of special distinction, affected by musical conductors, elderly politicians and certain hedge preachers, especially Negro preachers. "When he puts on the claw hammer coat, he's a different man."

We are made of the same *clay*.

*clay brains*

A stupid person.

*clay dirt eater*

One who has an abnormal craving to eat clay. Near where I live is a big hole in a clay bank where the local people used to come to satisfy their need.

*clay root*

An uprooted stump or tree with the clay clinging to its roots.

*clay root for brains*

To be weak in intellect. I've heard many a fervent Democrat speak thus of President Eisenhower, saying that he had a clay root for a head.

*clay the hearth*

The custom of getting whitish clay from a clay bank, wetting it and smearing the hearth with it at the beginning of summer, when fires would not be built till fall, and when company was expected, especially the preachers.

*clean*

Entirely, completely, positively. "When I come to the door, that man shot me and his bullet went clean through my belt and out of my back."

*clean* as a cat

*clean as a hound's tooth*

Honest, above reproach, of sterling character. Professor Horace Williams used to use this phrase about a number of his students, among them Watts Stacy and Sidney Robbins, always speaking of them as "clean as a hound's tooth."

*clean* as a pin

*clean* as a whistle

*come clean*

To confess the facts, to tell all. Much the same as clean breast of it.

*clean breast of it*

To confess, to tell all one knows.

*make a clean haul*

To completely rob the premises, to take away everything of value.

*Cleanliness* is next to godliness.

*clean up*

To take all the winnings. "You weren't here last Saturday in the game, but Brother Giduz cleaned up."

*Clean your finger* before you point it in accusation.

*as clear as a bell*

Open and above board, obvious.

as *clear* as a mirror

as *clear* as crystal

as *clear* as ditch water

*clear as mud*

Not clear at all, murky, unclear.

*in the clear*

To be proved innocent, not responsible, no evidence against.

*clear-headed*

Sober, a sagacious person, a right-thinking person.

*clear off*

Same as fair off, the weather growing fair or clear after cloudiness or rain or bad weather. "The weather man says it's going to clear off Tuesday, and I'm planning to put in my small grain on Wednesday if it's dry enough."

*clear-sighted*

Wise, perceiving, understanding.

*clear through*

Completely. "In the battle of Aversboro a cannonball went clear through the old Smith house."

*clear up*

With reference to bad weather clearing into fine. Also refers to one paying up his account. "He cleared up all his debts, and now he's in favor with the government in Washington again."

*clever*

Kind, accommodating.

*click*

To fit together, to remember suddenly. "Something clicked in his mind, and then he realized who it was that stood before him."

*clickety-clack*

The sound of a wobbly wagon or buggy wheel along the hard road. Also the rhythmic sound of a train passing over the joints in the railroad track.

*cliffhanger*

A close decision, a precarious situation.

*clim (clum)*

Past tense of climb.

If you don't *climb* high, you can't see far.

*climb down*

To lower one's sights, to eat crow, confess to error, take a lower place, submit.

*climb his frame*

A tongue lashing, to jump on or physically attack a person. "One more word out of you, bo, and I'll climb your frame."

*like climbing a greased pole with an armful of eels*

An almost impossible task, a job too hard to do.

*climbs* like a squirrel

The higher a man *climbs* the more of his behind he shows.

*climb Venus' mountain*

A man getting on top of a woman for sexual intercourse.

*clincher*

A conclusive argument or statement, a final proof.

*clinger*

One who is over-dependent.

*clink*

A jail, prison. "He sassed the judge, and the next thing he knowed he had landed in the clink."

*clip*

Stroke or short space of time. "He made a hundred dollars at one clip."

*to clip one's wings*

Place restrictions on one's plans or activities.

*clobber*

To beat unmercifully, to win over by a huge score. "The Green Bay Packers clobbered the Kansas Jets like I knowed they would."

A long-silent *clock* suddenly striking means death.

*clod*

A dull, stupid person.

*clodhopper*

A dolt, a dull fellow, the same as clod. Also refers to a country man, a rustic.

*clomb*

Climbed.

*close*

Hot, murky. "The weather's close today, and I'm expecting thunderheads this evening."

Stingy.

as *close* as Siamese twins

as *close* as your shadow

*close call*

A narrow escape.



A *closed* mouth catches no flies.

*closefisted*

Tightfisted, stingy.

*close mouth*

A secretive, non-confiding person.

*close thing*

A narrow escape.

*the cloth*

A clergyman.

You can't judge a man by his *clothes*.

Any *clothes* will fit a naked man.

*clothes horse*

A dandy, a man who wears clothes handsomely and often has little else to recommend him.

*Clothes make the man.*

An ancient proverb, more often false than true. But in the case of one person I knew in the Valley it was very true, this being a variation of the old Shakespeare adage that a man's soul is in his clothes. The clothes in this example, however, were limited to a pair of britches and their relation to the soul happened in a way you'd hardly expect.

Bernie Randall seemed the last person in the world to whom financial fortune might come. Nobody ever expected him to amount to much. He was awkward, timid, and uncertain with his weak, friendly smile, and homely as an old shoe. His people were poor as whippoorwills and lived down by the railroad tracks just a block or so from where later Bernie had his livery stable and then still later his huge automobile agency and used-car lot. His father was sickly and an addict to patent medicine, and the responsibility of both parents fell pretty much on the thin shrinking shoulders of this their only child.

Bernie grew up a drudge. From the time he was six or seven he was running errands for his parents, sweeping leaves out of the people's yards, hiring out to pick cotton in some of the fields that came up to the edge of the town, even trying to shine shoes, or standing on the corner, dumb and fearful, on Saturday afternoons with an armful of *Grit* newspapers for sale. But through all his twistings and turnings of odd jobs, he never developed the sharpness and quickness that one usually associates with an American boy in such situations. Rather he continued his humble and lonely browbeaten way.

He got a little schooling somehow — enough to read and write and do fairly simple sums in arithmetic — and later when he was big enough for his daddy to swear him by the child labor law he got a job weaving in the cotton mill, and there he labored year after year. When he was about nineteen, May Eppinger came to work at one of the nearby looms. She was a pretty round-faced girl with a light laugh and a craving for candy and milkshakes at the corner drugstore. Bernie fell deeply in love with her, and his devotion was doglike and persistent. May had a lot of other boys swarming around her, and with whatever levity or even bursts of scorn she treated Bernie he continued his dreamings and devotions to her.

In time his parents died and left him alone in the little house that had been their home. It was a rented place and now Bernie indulged in some planning of his own. From his earnings he was able to make a mortgage deal with young Ed Weatherford at the bank to buy the little place. So he started paying monthly installments on it. Every now and then he would extract a dollar or two from his thin savings and get a box of candy for May, and once or twice he was able to get ahead enough to take her to the state fair at Raleigh. But of course come wet weather or dry weather, rain or shine, he must somehow scrape up enough each month for his house payments. And regularly he would take his few dollars down to the bank and there hand them over to young Weatherford, who in a swift round business hand would write out the receipt and pass it through the grill to Bernie with a cool and pleasant air.

This young Weatherford was everything that Bernie was not. He was handsome, educated at the university at Chapel Hill, and sure of a big future with the power and money he had inherited from his father.

Though May had numerous suitors, somehow time passed and she remained unmarried. Maybe the men liked courting her better than marrying her. Whether for weariness from working at the mill or what not, she finally gave in and married Bernie, and then began to take her ease in the little house down by the railroad track.

And Bernie liked for her to do that. "You've already done your share of hard work, Baby," he would say. He loved to call her Baby. And he treated her like a baby, and she purred with satisfaction and lay back cool and sweet.

One year, two years went by and May was taking it easy and Bernie was working like a dog in the mills. But however hard he worked, his promotion was slow. He never could learn to deal with people, become swift and to the point, authoritative, a manager. Others younger and less experienced passed him by and became floor bosses or loom inspectors or even superintendents. But poor Bernie mostly remained at his loom. He didn't worry too much though for after all he had May, and in his humble opinion it was quite fitting that others should become successful and he continue in the rut where he was, though he would never think of it as a rut.

But May began to complain about the little house. "It's not fit to live in," she said. "We've got to fix it up, it leaks like a sieve." And so the patient Bernie went down to the bank again and, after long talking to young Weatherford, arranged to borrow three thousand dollars on the house and lot for remodeling and improvement. So after succumbing to a stiff financing fee plus the regular six percent interest, he was ready to sign the papers and, following young Weatherford's instructions, brought his wife May to sign with him. She was all dolled up for the occasion and it made Bernie proud to see that young Weatherford looked at her with admiring eyes.

The pinch on Bernie was harder now. It was tough making the monthly payments on the loan. And once when he fell sick and lost two weeks from work, the first cold grip of despair got its bite into his stolid and lightless soul. He looked at Baby propped up in bed reading a murder serial in the newspapers and for once wrung his hands. "What am I going to do, Baby?" he queried.

"Oh, you'll make it somehow," came her light answer. "You always do. And, say, I seen an ad in the paper yesterday for salesmen at forty dollars a week. That's fifteen dollars a week more'n you're making now," she said.

Bernie shook his head. The idea of being a salesman frightened him. But she insisted. "I bet Ed Weatherford — Mr. Ed would recommend you and help you get the job," she said.

"Not him," said Bernie. "All he studies is money — and women."

"Women?" she laughed.

Under her insistence Bernie went down and sure enough Ed Weatherford recommended him highly to the vacuum cleaner company and he got the job. Not only that, the bank lent him enough money on a second mortgage to get a secondhand Ford. And so Bernie's days as a vacuum cleaner salesman began. He worked hard at it. Nobody could deny that. He was up early and gone to distant points, here and yonder from farm to farm and village to village and from county to county, pushing his product.

The depression days were coming on down now and sales resistance was growing. He intensified his efforts. He was up earlier. He worked later and drove farther. But every night somehow he would get back home to his Baby. Sometimes when he was up and away at early dawn and an installment on the house was coming due at the bank, he would have to have May take the money and go down to Ed Weatherford and pay it.

Things tightened up all along the line now and the banks were pulling in their horns some. Young Weatherford himself would go visiting among the farmers, foreclosing and collecting here and there. And sometimes he would come humming home at night in his blue Cadillac with quite a roll of money in his pocket, even as much as \$5,000, it was said, to be deposited the next day.

That's the way it was with him. Whatever he went after he succeeded.

And all the while poor Bernie Randall was coming down to bankruptcy. One day he got up early to start one of his dreary rounds. He had heard that over in Wilson, a town some fifty or sixty miles away, there were several prospects. He told May he wouldn't be back that night and for her to get one of her sisters to come and stay with her. She laughed and said she wasn't afraid to stay by herself and she put out her pretty lips as usual in a rosebud pout as he kissed her goodbye.

"I'll be back tomorrow night," he said. And he drove off.

All day he drove through the virgin territory. But sales resistance was a hundred percent. The tobacco market had just opened and the price was bad and the papers had given the prospects as being even less encouraging for the future. Late in the afternoon, completely whipped down, he decided to drive by Raleigh and talk things over with the head office there. When he arrived, the first news that hit him between the eyes was that his agency was being cancelled. A letter was already in the mail to him saying so. He turned in his sample cleaner and stumbled back to his little Ford car and sat there numbed and anguished. The darkness came down, the street lights flared on and still he sat staring at a black wall before him. And all the while he was thinking of how he had failed, miserably failed his sweet and precious Baby. Wait till he got home and told her the terrible news of what had happened to him! How could he tell her, how could he break her heart like that. And in his mind he could see her lying up in bed, beautiful and sweet, a wonder and joy for any man to be proud of.

"Yes, lying in bed," he said to himself. He wasn't trying to put meaning in the words. He was only reciting them to himself. Then suddenly they had a meaning and he didn't like the feeling that came over him, a new feeling.

For the first time in his life Bernie Randall began to feel sorry for himself as he really was, a poor plodding dull fellow, hard put on by others.

Later a policeman tapped on his car window and told him he would have to move. And back through the night toward home Bernie drove.

"The bank will foreclose on me now," he moaned. "I know that Ed Weatherford. He will squash me like a mouse in a steel trap." Anger began to rage in him. "It's a bargain he'll get too when he takes my house. That's the way them fellows make their money. They get poor guys like me in their grip and gripe and then squeeze 'em and take away what they got. And then they turn around and sell it to somebody else for double what it's worth."

There must be some way out, there must be. He couldn't drag Baby down into complete poverty and have to start living all over again in a rented two-room mill shack and be back in the mill beaming away — from morning to evening beaming away, and the lint sucking into his lungs. But what, what could he do?

When he got within a block of his home he cut his rattle-trap motor off and let the car roll silently up to the house as was his custom when coming

home late. He was always careful not to wake Baby. He got out softly and walked along the grass up to the little front porch. He unlocked the door gently and went into the hall. Setting his pasteboard suitcase down quietly, he made his way along the little passageway to the bedroom. He felt for the door and opened it noiselessly and there in the dark he took off his coat and trousers and laid them on a chair as ever. And it was just like him, the awkward fellow he was, to bump into the chair and make a racket. Baby's voice cried out in sheer and sudden terror from the big bed, "What's that!"

"Sh-sh, nobody but me, Baby," he said. There came a stifling, shaking noise from the bed. "I didn't mean to scare you," he said. "Wait'll I turn on the light."

"No! No!" And her voice was high and frantic.

"What's the matter, Baby?" he said, all sympathy and concern.

"I've got the most awful headache," she said. "It's killing me, it is. I don't know what to do with it. Please, please, don't turn on the light. My eyes would hurt so, my eyes!"

And he could hear her sitting up in bed and rocking from side to side.

Then in his concern he said he would get a hot pad or come and rub her head, and she pleaded with him not to do it but to go at once right down to the drugstore and get her some aspirin. "No, no," she said. "You'd better get me some luminol, for this headache come on all of a sudden and it's killing me, busting my skull with the pain of it! Oh! Oh!"

He told her that the drugstore would be closed that time of night but she said if he would hurry he could wake up Ned Sauls the druggist and get something to ease her, seeing that this was such an emergency. Poor Bernie was so upset that he began feeling around hunting for his trousers on the chair. Finally he found them, pulled them on, grabbed up his coat and set off running down toward the drugstore some two blocks away. He threw gravel up to the second-story window and waked Ned Sauls who came down grumbling and growling. The nervous and excited Bernie told him about Baby's sudden and violent sick headache and she had to have help right away.

"That's the first time I ever knowed she had headaches," said Ned Sauls as he grugged out some luminol tablets. "That'll be fifty cents."

"You better charge it, Ned," said Bernie.

"I'd like to have cash if I could, Bernie, seeing how it is," he said.

Bernie had some change in his pocket but hated to spare even a fifty-cent piece at this time from his dwindling funds. But what had to be had to be. He reached into his pocket and then froze for an instant in his tracks. Slowly his hand came out of his pocket like a thing alive and of itself and in this hand which he held before him Bernie saw a great roll of bills with a rubber band around them. He stared at the bills, a wad so big that his fingers and thumb would hardly shut around it. Ned looked at him with popping eyes.

"Jerusalem!" he finally exploded. "Business must have been good lately, Bernie!"

"Looks — er — like it," Bernie finally spoke up stutteringly.

"It does that! How much you got there? Oh, hush my big mouth!"

"Hah, hah, hah," said Bernie again, and he heard the sound of his own voice high and shrill, like a stranger speaking.

Now Ned the druggist was looking at him with growing admiration in his face. "Doggone my hide," he said. "You must be some salesman. I reckon that'll make folks eat their words. Sure, buddy, I'll charge it, charge it. Anytime you want anything, come and get it and I'll put it right on the books, yessir."

Bernie let his gaze travel downward. A shock went through his spare frame again though he made no outward sign.

He was wearing another man's trousers.

He finally turned away, pushing the roll of bulging bills back into his pocket. "Much obliged to you, Ned," he called and went out of the store.

He took his time in walking home. It was only a short distance but a lot of things were happening in his head as he walked. Thoughts went flashing by one another, ideas, happenings, and gears inside were turning as they never had turned before.

When he got near the house, he tried to whistle. But his lips were so dry that he had to wet them with his tongue. And after several efforts he finally got out a stave or two of the only song he knew called "Come, Humble Sinner, Come," which he had learned in Sunday School years before. Baby would hear him and know he was coming back. Then he saw that he didn't have to whistle anymore, for far down the sidewalk he discerned the figure of a man rapidly disappearing into the darkness. And he knew who the man was and he knew too that he was wearing away a pair of slick-seated dark britches with about two dollars change in the pockets.

Bernie doddled around outside the house for a while and then went into the kitchen and got a glass of cold water and took it to Baby. She was sitting up on the bed with the light on, bent over and her arms wrapped around her knees. She didn't look up when he came into the room but just sat there.

"Here you are, Baby," he said, holding out the glass. "I got you the luminol." She said nothing. "You got the light on now," he said. "Don't it hurt your eyes?"

"No, I'm feeling a little better now," she said. And she took the glass of water and swallowed a couple of luminol tablets, then lay back in bed and pulled the covers up to her chin. "Have a good trip?" she finally inquired.

"Well, not so good at first," he said. "But maybe not so bad after all. I'll tell you about it in the morning."

"All right," she said, "do. And come on to bed now."

He switched off the light and went out into the hall. He heard her body jackknife up in bed again as she called out, "Ain't you coming to bed here?"

"I'm going to lie down out here," he said. "I got some figuring to do." She said no more and he stretched himself out on the sofa which was set against the wall in the little combination entrance hall and living room. He lay there in the darkness thinking, thinking. And presently he heard Baby begin her snuggly little snoring.

"Lordy mercy, she's already asleep!" he said to himself incredulously. Then he thought some more.

Presently he got up and with his shoes in his hand slipped out through the backdoor and sat on the steps looking out toward his small plot of vegetable garden. The rest of the night he sat there and when the dawn was breaking and the chilly sparrows were chattering in the maples along the street, he went in and changed into his one remaining suit of clothes and came out with a package, which he deposited in the incinerator in the yard and started a fire burning it. Then he returned to the house and began cooking breakfast.

Later in the morning he went to the bank.

"Morning, Miss Raeford," he said, as he stood before the teller's window.

"Morning, Bernie," she said without much respect in her voice. It was the same old thing. He had come about his small payments.

"I'd like to see Mr. Weatherford," he said.

"He's busy," she replied. "You can take the payments up with me as usual."

"I want to see him," said Bernie. His manner caused her to glance up, and he was looking at her straight and unblinking.

She went away and in a moment the door to an inner office opened and Weatherford appeared in it. He held the knob in his hand as if ready to step back and close the door any moment. Bernie didn't smile. His face never changed, but there was a sort of queer smile deep in his soul to see Weatherford holding on to the knob.

"I thought," said Bernie, "I'd like to see you a little bit about my — about my mortgages."

"All right. What is it, Bernie?"

"I'd like to pay them off."

Weatherford was silent a moment, then spoke up strongly, "There's no hurry, Bernie. The bank is satisfied the way things are going, your paying by the month." But Bernie said he was not satisfied and wanted to settle up "right here and now." Weatherford turned to Miss Raeford abruptly and told her to bring out the papers. The papers were brought and marked

paid as Bernie counted out the full amount in greenbacks. Weatherford kept looking at him unblinking too and saying nothing.

"Thank you, Ed," Bernie said, as he put the canceled papers in his breast pocket. This was the first time he'd ever addressed the banker without a handle to his name.

"You're welcome," said Weatherford coldly.

"And I reckon this sort of squares things betwixt us," Bernie concluded.

"Well then — all right — glad it does," Weatherford said harshly.

And Bernie walked out of the bank a different man.

The depression came down more fiercely after this and began to wipe out Ed Weatherford's holdings. Like the fellows on Wall Street he had over-extended himself. At the bottom of the market Bernie — with the fifteen hundred dollars he still had left from the amount found in the britches — made a down payment on a farm in the edge of town which had formerly belonged to Weatherford and the bank. He had confidence in himself now, and he held grimly onto it like a fice dog. And when the depression later lifted and money was easy again, he cut the farm up into building lots, sold them off and made a killing. After this there was no stopping him.

Now in these later days as you come driving along the highway toward our town you are likely to see a good splashing sign carrying the big lettered name of Bernard Randall, Dealer in Real Estate, Farm Equipment and Fertilizer. And then when you get inside the town, you are further confronted with Bernard Randall's success as a businessman. On the corner of Main and High Street is Randall's Drugstore. A block higher up on the same main street is Randall's Hardware Store, above which is the owner's suite of plush-furnished real estate offices. And farther south in the edge of town by the railroad tracks is his huge auto business.

And as for Baby, well, she is completely changed now, and as everybody knows idolizes Bernie and can't do enough for him. She brings his slippers at night, she fixes his oatmeal in the morning, she mothers and waits on him as if he were a child. And he takes it all with never a word and never a sign to tell how he feels about her or anything else.

But in spite of all his business success, his fine new home, better clothes and such, he remains outwardly pretty much the same fellow he always was. He still speaks in his halting, awkward way and goes with slightly bent shoulders, his face still pale and freckled and his blue eyes dull as ever they were.

But he doesn't smile anymore, the way he used to do in his more humble days.

*not worth the clothes on his back*

Poverty stricken, has no wealth, owns nothing but the clothes on his back.



*in a cloud*

To be dreamy, romantic, abstracted.

*Red cloud* in the morning

Sailors take warning.

Red cloud at night

Sailors' delight.

(Wisdom rhyme.)

*under a cloud*

To be in disgrace, or under suspicion.

Every *cloud* has a silver lining.

*cloud nine*

A condition of balmy happiness. "We were all up on cloud nine till the second half, and then the roof caved in."

*cloud up*

To darken one's countenance, to become surly.

*clout*

A heavy blow. "In the play the boy clouted his daddy on the head with a hoe and laid him out for dead."

*clout-head*

A fool.

*in clover*

To be all fixed, secure, fine and dandy. Fun, pleasure. Also means riches.

*Club Fist*

A popular game. The child or young person who is "It" lays his clenched fist on the table with his thumb elevated. Then the second player grasps this raised thumb with his own fist and raises his own thumb, and so on and on until a pile of fists and thumbs is built up. "It" who has kept one hand free now asks questions of the person whose hand is at the top with the following dialogue and action:

"What you got there?"

"A club fist."

"Take it off or knock it off?" (And here, if the player is especially tough he often says "Knock it off," and then "It" has to hit the fist with his own knuckles hard enough to knock it off. Sometimes plenty of squeals of pain follow this procedure.) If the player gives the more common answer, "Take it off," the following dialogue ensues:

"What you got there?"

"Bread and cheese."

"Where's my share?"

"The cat's got it."

"Where's the cat?"

"In the woods."

"Where's the woods?"

"The fire burnt it."

"Where's the fire?"

"The water squenched it."

"Where's the water?"

"The ox drank it."

"Where's the ox?"

"The butcher killed him."

"Where's the butcher?"

"The rope hung him."

"Where's the rope?"

"The knife cut it."

"Where's the knife?"

"The hammer broke it."

"Where's the hammer?"

"The saw sawed it."

"Where's the saw?"

"Broke in three pieces and hid behind the old church door."

"And the first child that shows his teeth in a grin receives a pinch and a hair pull."

And so the children firmly close their lips and look around at one another. Finally, someone does grin, and a pinch and a hair pull follow. Sometimes a forfeit is required, and one young person would take another one on his back and trot around the room, and when he comes up before "It," "It" says "What you got there?"

"Bag of nits."

"Shake him 'til he spits."

And then follows a terrific jostling up and down.

Another version of Club Fist is given in Brown's folklore book. The players put their fists on top of each other, each grasping the thumb of the one just below his. The one whose fist is on top asks the others if they want to take their fists off or if they want them knocked off. Some choose one and some choose another. When all but one are off, "It" the questioner, asks the owner, "What you got there?" Answer, "Bread and cheese," and the play goes on as before, ending with a different penalty — "The first one that shows his teeth gets four slaps, five pinches, six spankings and four hair pulls."

*cluck*

A person, a fool, usually a dumb cluck.

*clucking hen*

A woman fussy about her children.

*clum*

Past tense of climb.

*clump*

A heavy blow or noise, a bump.

as *clumsy* as a cow (an ox)

*clunk*

A sudden bump or sound.

*clutch*

A difficult situation. "That Sandy Koufax is one of the best clutch pitchers in the game."

*clutch-fisted*

Miserly, stingy.

*clutter*

A crowd, a mess, a confusion. "There they all set about in a clutter — the governor ready to paint the wee babe's portrait as soon as she comes into the world."

*clyde*

Head, brains, mind. "Use your clyde, boy, use it."

*co*

A call to animals, especially cattle.

*coach and six*

In high style, pridefully. "She rides in a coach and six."

*coachwhip*

A fabled snake, famous in Valley folklore.

When I was a child I was told frightful stories of this dreadful snake, how he would swirl up out of the bushes or tall grass, wrap himself around you, pull you to a tree, souse the spiked tip of his tail into the tree and squeeze the life out of you then and there the while his red smoky eyes gazed deep into yours and his forked tongue jiggled a graveyard stink close to your face. Sometimes when he didn't want to choke you to death but only give you a beating and scare you into fits, this snake would wrap the forepart of his body around you and give you a thrashing with his powerful tail. Then

sometimes too in chasing his victim he would put his tail in his mouth and roll down a hill like a hoop in pursuit of his intended prey.

One day I was out with a group of local historians — Phillips Russell, Jack Crane, Malcolm Fowler and others — in the Flora MacDonald country in Anson County. Ed Hill, a local resident, was showing us through the woods, looking for landmarks, especially for the place where Flora and her husband Allan's house had been. I noticed a cedar tree that stood bushy and dead and asked him what caused the death of this tree. Maybe the extra dry weather had caused it, I said. Hill, a big red-faced, pot-bellied fellow, stopped and fixed us historians with his eye. "Now that's something strange," he said, "that tree. I'll tell you exactly what killed it. It was a coachwhup snake done it. That coachwhup got after me one day when I was walking in these woods here, and I lit a rag and rode the bushes going away. But he was right after me with his spiked tail in his mouth, rolling like a hoop to catch me. I made it by this tree, and 'bam,' he banged into the tree. I reckon it make him mad, for he hauled off and soused the end of his spike into that tree, and I got away while he was all tangled up. And that's what killed it — the poison from his tail."

We all laughed and he looked the more serious. When I asked him could he show us the sign on the tree where the snake's spiked tail had entered, he said, "Oh, they don't leave no sign, they're too smart for that, them coachwhups."

*coal of fire*

If a coal of fire pops toward you from the fireplace, you will soon receive a letter.

eyes like *coals* of fire

*carry coals to Newcastle*

A foolish act, something superfluous. When I was in Russia sometime ago, a young lady told me they had a comparable saying in Russia— "Carrying one's samovar to Tula" — Tula being the manufacturing center for samovars for all Russia.

*heap coals of fire on one's head*

To repay a bad action with a good one, to cause a person to be conscience-stricken.

*to haul over the coals*

To bring up sharply, to reprimand, to bless out, to punish by words and accusations.

*coal-up*

To take on coal, as a locomotive.

*co-anch*

A call to a cow. I can still hear my father calling to our cow down in the woods. "Co-anch! Co-anch!" Years later I learned his call was from the old English call of "cow-wench!"

as *coarse* as hog hair

*coarse part*

The part of a tune played on the D & G fiddle strings. The fine part is played on the E & A.

*the coast is clear*

No danger awaits, everything is easy-going, nobody watching. "The coast is clear. Come on over, honey," the lady said.

*turn one's coat*

To desert a party or a cause, traitorous, become turncoat.

*wear Uncle Sam's coat*

To don a military uniform, to enter the military service.

*coattail*

A woman's skirt. "That boy won't never amount to a row of pins, he's always tied to his mother's coattail."

*cob*

The pith of an ear of corn. In eastern North Carolina the farmers often used cobs in the place of toilet paper.

The *cobbler's* children go barefooted.

*have a cobweb in the throat*

To be hoarse, to have a dry throat.

*cobwebs*

Common folk remedy for excessive bleeding. They were often used by country people for a mother right after childbirth.

I remember when I was a boy that Wesley Armstrong, a tenant on our little farm, came rushing up to the house one morning, hollering for cobwebs. I crawled up through a hole in the ceiling into the loft and helped gather cobwebs. Wesley grabbed them in his hands and went running toward the juniper, where he lived, to apply them to his wife Meta who had just given birth to a baby. It worked fine, he later reported.

*co'cola* (Coca-Cola)

A popular drink, much guzzled in the Valley as everywhere else in the United States and on into Europe and Asia. When I was traveling and lecturing in the Orient, I found that this was perhaps the best ambassador Uncle Sam had and was doing much to undo the ignorant and selfish Yankee diplomacy

practiced by many of our uninformed representatives in that region of the world.

And how Ollie Marshall loved it! This Ollie was a grandson of old Doctor Henry Marshall Turner who once lived in a fine mansion on the bank of the Cape Fear River some miles below what is now Buie's Creek, the village that presently houses Campbell University. But Ollie took no interest in the grand old place. He let it run down and finally become inhabited by a family of Negro tenant farmers, the while he lived in a little slop-sided bungalow over in Lillington. Many a time I talked to Ollie about the history of the house and the old books, letters and documents left to rot in the empty upstairs rooms, asking him to let me do something about them. Finally one day he agreed, and I went over and got the trunk of my car filled with this material, which I gave to the university library at Chapel Hill. There were dozens of letters to and from Valley people who, because of hard times after the Civil War, had migrated to Texas.

I well remember the day I talked to Ollie about these old letters. That particular morning after I had heighhoed a while, he came to the door of his little frame bungalow and looked out. Lifting his big pole-like arms above his head, he yawned, showing several of his rotted front teeth, then spat off into the yard. I told him again what I wanted.

"Yeh," he said, "I talked to Sally, and she says she don't see no reason why you can't take anything you find over there in that old house. But you won't find much but old plunder."

"Much obliged to you, Ollie," I said, "I'm much obliged."

"Aw, go 'way," he grunted, "you're welcome to it. What you want with such old mess I don't see."

"Well, I just like to save old letters, books and things," I spoke. "They're mighty interesting, and sometimes they throw a lot of light on the history of a section."

"Maybe they do. You're like Grandma Caroline in that. She used to save everything — most of what's over there was what she saved up. She was certainly proud of her folks, and she could write things, too."

"I know," I said.

"Ever see that little poetry book she wrote?"

"Yes, 'Star in the West,' it's called," I said. "I wish I could find a copy of it. Mr. Mac used to have a copy, but somebody borrowed it, he said, and he's never found it."

"I had a copy of it around here some'rs," said Ollie, "but I lost it too. 'Star in the West,' that's right, I remember now, mostly about Texas, weren't it? Because so many of our folks went off to Texas. My Uncle Ken went out there, Grandma's son."

"Yes."

"I used to think of going to Texas myself, but I never did," he said.

He yelled out to a Negro boy over at the filling station across the street, "Hey, Bo, bring me over a co'cola." The boy called most politely back that it was coming right up, "Mr. Ollie, sir, yes suh."

"I was hoping I'd be able to find some of your Grandma Caroline's letters over there maybe, Ollie," I said.

"Yeh, you might."

"I'll be able to get into the house, won't I? I won't need a key?"

"Lord, no, you couldn't shut the front door if you tried to. The ivy's all growed into the hall and choked up everything. And you better be careful too and not let a piece of the roof cave in and kill you. And maybe you'd better watch out for them highland moccasins. They're fearful pizenous, you know," he said.

"I'll be careful, Ollie."

And then his face lighted all up with feeling, for a shiny new yellow Cadillac had come swinging around the corner with Henry Thompkins, now mayor of the town and cashier of the bank — descendant of one of the white tenants who used to live on the great Dr. Henry Marshall Turner plantation — sitting at the steering wheel.

"Jees," Ollie said, "ain't that a honey! Sweetest thing that runs on the road, they tell me."

"Is it, Ollie?"

"Yeh, it is. That's what I'm going to set myself up to one of these days. Ezzactly that. Come in here and let me show you that new trick I've got for controlling window shades. I've just had it patented."

"Much obliged, Ollie, but I'd better be getting over to the old place."

"Oh well, I see you're in a hurry to get to that old trash."

"Some other time I'd like to know how you're coming along with your inventions," I said, "the roller and the perpetual motion machine, but right now —"

"Yeh, I'm coming along fine. I had another letter from my patent lawyer yesterday. One more payment of ten dollars to him and then I'll be ready to form a corporation for putting it on the market and—"

"That'll be fine, Ollie."

"Yeh, they's a fortune in it. Everybody says so that's seen it. From now on window shades will stand where you leave 'em — won't be flying up out of your hand. And as for perpetual motion —"

"Here's your co'cola, Mr. Ollie," the boy said, coming into the scene.

Ollie with a careless throw-away gesture handed the boy a nickel. And I went away, leaving this grandson of the great Dr. Henry Marshall Turner who performed the first appendicitis operation in the southeast and was a descendant of generals and judges — I left Ollie Marshall sucking on his bottle.

I hurried across the river to the old mansion and got a load of material

and took it to the university library. Some weeks went by before I could go back to the place again, and when I turned into the little field road leading to where the mansion had stood, nothing was there but emptiness and a few blistered old elm and maple trees. The beautiful ancient house had burned to the ground. Some of the Negroes carelessly living in one of the downstairs rooms had left the fire burning in the fireplace, and a chunk evidently had rolled out onto the floor and set it afire. So they told me later. Thus this thing of grace and forgetfulness perished to ashes as so many old homes in the South have perished.

But Ollie didn't mind — there where he fumbled and worked at his window shade holder and his perpetual motion machine. When I saw him on another day he shrugged his shoulders and spoke up carelessly, saying, "I knowed it was going to get burned up someday. That's the way it goes. You try to help niggers by giving 'em a home to live in and what do they do? — they burn your house down for you."

See "Caroline Turner" and "Dr. Henry Marshall Turner."

*cock*

Penis, also female genitals.

To copulate.

*cock-a-doodle-do*

A rooster's call at the break of day. Also describes irresponsible behavior. "He played cock-a-doodle-do all over the place, and nigh broke up the party."

*cock and bull story*

A big lie, an outlandish narrative.

*cockcrow*

Daybreak. "My daddy used to get up year after year exactly at cockcrow."

*cockeye*

A squinting eye, a crossed eye.

*knocked into a cocked hat*

Destroyed, flattened, smashed.

*cockeyed*

Topsy-turvy, all awry, cranksided. "I'll tell the cockeyed world I'll not back down on what I said."

*cockiness*

Conceit, over self-assertion.



*cockish*

Wanton, high-spirited.

*cocklebur*

Alternate doses of quinine and tea made of cockleburs (gathered before frost), used for diphtheria or typhoid fever.

*a cocklebur under his saddle*

One who is excessively irritated.

*close as a cocklebur in a sheep's wool*

Hard to move, stingy.

*cock of the walk*

A dandy, a bossman, the champion, the winner.

*cockroach*

A low-down fellow.

*Cock Robin*

A nursery rhyme of many stanzas. Often used as a rhetorical question, "Who killed Cock Robin?" in critical reference to one who is guilty of bringing about a negative action, as killing a legislative bill.

*cocksucker*

A reprobate, a reprehensible person, a homosexual.

*cocksure*

Quite certain.

*cocky*

Conceited, brash.

*cod*

The scrotum.

*coddle*

To cuddle, also to spoil a child, over-pet one.

*cod's head*

A fool, a dolt.

*Job's coffin*

A constellation in the sky. Also a kind of string formation we children used to play with stringed hands.

*coffin blow*

An especially forlorn wailing of a train whistle. In eastern North Carolina we often would hear the whistle of a distant train, and when it was especially

mournful, we would say, "Listen to that train's coffin blow," meaning that we figured the train had a coffin on board.

*coffin tack*

A cigarette, the same as coffin nail.

*coffin varnish*

Rot gut liquor.

*cohonk*

The sound made by wild geese flying through the sky in the winter time.  
The Algonquin Indians used the word cohonk to mean winter.

Stuff a *cold* and starve a fever.

as *cold* as a corpse

as *cold* as a dog's nose

as *cold* as a fish

as *cold* as an iceberg

as *cold* as a well-digger's ass

as *cold* as blue blazes

as *cold* as charity

as *cold* as Christmas

as *cold* as death

as *cold* as frog's foot

as *cold* as flury

I used to puzzle over the word "flury" which was in common usage when I was a boy in eastern North Carolina. I suppose it is a corruption of "fury."

as *cold* as hell

as *cold* as ice

as *cold* as kraut

as *cold* as marble

as *cold* as steel

as *cold* as stone

as *cold* as the grave

as *cold* as the hinges of hell

*cold blood*

Bad and sluggish circulation.

Merciless, brutal. "Willie Evans killed his little niece in cold blood, and he oughta die in that there gas chamber."

*cold-blooded* as a snake*cold comfort*

No comfort at all.

*cold day in August*

A time far distant, a rare occasion. "It'll be a cold day in August before I'll shake hands with him."

*cold deck*

No-luck cards.

*cold enough* to freeze the balls off a brass monkey

Very cold indeed.

*cold feet*

To be weak-kneed, cowardly, weak-willed.

*cold-hurt*

Frost bit.

*cold shivers*

A fit of trembling, the apprehensive shakes. "The story of old Rawhead-and-bloody-bones used to send the cold shivers through us children."

*cold shoulder*

A rebuff, a snub.

*cold snap*

A short spell of cold weather.

*cold turkey*

Straight talk, shoulder to shoulder, man to man. "He kept bellyaching about his job, and so one day I called him into my office and I talked cold turkey to him. After that he seemed to do a little better."

*left cold*

To be completely deserted. "She up and left him cold, running off with the sewing machine man."

*out in the cold*

Neglected, forgotten, passed by.

*cold vittles*

Poor fare, sorry food, dull entertainment.

*Cold walls* make unhappy wives.

*throw cold water on*

To discourage.

*colic*

An old cure for the colic was to stand on one's head for half an hour.

*collar*

To grab by the collar, to choke. Also to girdle or deaden a tree by cutting a ring in the bark around it. "I've collared five acres of trees, and they'll be dead by fall and ready for clearing!"

*collar and hames*

Necktie and stiff collar, courting clothes.

*collard leaves*

Collard or Jimson leaves, wilted in the oven, will take the fever out of risings; also for headaches.

*collards*

A popular green vegetable in North Carolina. Some years ago a group of us interested in the literary development of the state went around lecturing and having fun holding symposiums on the subject, "Culture and Collards." We still raise collards in our own garden and, traveling through the South, one sees them in nearly every countryman's vegetable plot. In the winter we used to turn them down with their heads to the south and put dirt on the upper side to protect them from the cold. How often, year after year, the same phrase would be spoken by my father: "The winter is really here now, and it's time to turn down the collards."

*collywobbles*

Stomach pains, also sentimental feelings. "This here Luther King has got collywobbles all about the pore nigger, and some day somebody's gonna up and kill him!"

Let me see the *color* of your eyes when you talk to me.

Let me see the *color* of your money.

*off-color*

Bawdy, vulgar, not fit for polite society.

*colt*

A frisky young person.

A ragged *colt* may make a good horse.

*coltish*

Wild, frisky, full of gay spirits.

The wildest *colts* make the best horses — after they are broken.

*comb his head*

To whip, scold, to beat.

*comb the woods*

To search thoroughly.

*to cut one's comb*

To humiliate, to deprive one of honor, to penalize heavily.

*come*

To have sexual orgasm.

At the time of, on the arrival of. "He'll be six years old come next August 10."

All things *come* to him who waits.

*come about*

To happen, to occur.

*come a cropper*

Downfall, bankruptcy, failure in one's plans.

*come across*

To meet with accidentally. "When I was up in Chapel Hill recently, I come across one of my old college buddies and, man, did we have a reunion."

To hit upon, to find, to discover. "I come across a verse in the Bible that told me exactly what to do."

To pay up, to own up, tell the truth, confess.

*come and go*

A topsy-turvy gathering, a mommick and a mess. "I couldn't stay there, it was such a come and go all the time."

*Come, butter, come*

A sort of divination rhyme. We used to chant this as we churned the dasher up and down.

"Come, butter, come.

For I want some.

Peter's waiting at the gate

For a little frosted cake.  
Come, butter, come,  
For I want some."

*come by*

To get, to acquire. "Ah, Lord, money's mighty hard to come by these days."

*come clean*

To tell the truth, own up, confess.

*comed*

Past tense of come.

*come down on like a ton of bricks*

To berate, to humiliate, also to scold.

*come fresh*

Said of a cow which has just calved. It was a belief in our family — and throughout the Valley for that matter — that for several days the milk from a fresh cow was not good to drink. It was usually fed to the hogs for three or four days.

*come hell or high water*

In spite of all difficulties.

*"Come Home, Father"*

A tear-jerking temperance song.

*come in*

To mature, be ready for harvest. "I'll be ready to go when my corn comes in."

*come in one of*

Almost, on the point of. "He come in one of falling into that icy creek."

*come it*

To do, to measure up to, succeed. "I tried to jump that ditch but couldn't come it."

*come off*

A sexual spasm, orgasm. "We both come off at the same time, eigh, Lord!"

*a come-off*

A to-do, a bad result, an unhappy condition. "What a come-off when in this democracy of ours plain blatant lying on both domestic and international matters has become the policy."

*Come off it.*

Quit misbehaving.

*come on*

A salutation, a greeting, an inquiry after one's health. "How you come on today, Billy?" The answer usually was, "Well as common."

*a come-on*

A lure, a seduction.

*come out*

To fare, to receive treatment. "How did you come out in that poker game?"

*come out at the big end of the horn*

Make a fine profit.

*come out at the little end of the horn*

To fail, to be cheated, to lose out, suffer the worst of a bargain. Opposite of "big end."

*come out in the wash*

The truth will show, will come out in the testing.

*come out strong*

To advocate or support vigorously. "He come out strong on the liquor question."

*come round*

To reach an agreement. "After an hour's talk," John said, "each come round to the other's point of view, and they had to start all over again."

*comes to*

Revived after fainting. "Stand back and give her air till she comes to."

*"Come, Thou Almighty King"*

One of the many fighting military-spirited songs, beloved by the people.

"Come, thou Incarnate Word,  
Gird on thy mighty sword.  
Our prayer attend."

It has everything, from fighting to glory and love at the end:

"His sovereign majesty  
May we in glory see  
And to eternity  
Love and adore."

*"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"*

Another hymn that has brought comfort to many a soul in the Valley as elsewhere. It was one of my mother's favorites, and she constantly sang it about the house. It sent me as a boy to the dictionary too to find out what

a “melodious sonnet” and “raise my Ebenezer” meant. Nor could I understand, dictionary or not, how he (Jesus) could rescue me from danger by the use of his “precious blood.” Through my long years of studying religion and teaching philosophy since, I have learned that I’m not supposed to understand. This brings me no comfort, of course, as I, now in winter’s years, watch the dynamic industrial age hurry us on in spite of all religion and its faiths toward a conclusion for man not nice to think about.

*come through*

To pass from a state of sin to a state of grace or forgiveness. “They prayed over that tough fellow, Eddie Kirk Matthews, I bet two hours, and finally he come through.”

To survive a critical illness. “The doctors had done give him up for dead, but his heart kept on beating and he come through it finally.”

*come to grief*

To run into bad luck, to meet with failure. “Jack Nicklaus was way out in front, and then he come to grief on the ninth hole.”

*a come-to-Jesus coat*

A long swallowtail coat often worn by Negro preachers or old-time politicians.

*come to the scratch*

The test, the showdown. “When it comes to the scratch, you’ll see — he’ll weasel out of it.”

*come to stay*

To remain permanently. “That old mockingbird has run every robin off the place and come to stay.”

*come undone*

To be loosened. “Right in the middle of his holy dancing, Grandpa’s britches come undone, and that was it.”

*come unglued*

To go to pieces, have an angry fit, suffer a nervous breakdown.

*come up*

To sprout through the soil. “My cotton’s come up the worst this year — too blamed cold and dry.”

A command for a horse or a mule to go forward, opposite of “whoa.”

*comeuppance*

Just deserts, retribution. “She gave him his comeuppance all right for getting drunk.”



*come up to snuff*

To meet expectations or needs.

*“Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy”*

The actual title of this hymn is “I Will Arise and Go to Jesus,” but we always referred to it by its first line. It was a most effective hymn in bringing the erring ones to the mourners’ bench. Its appeal was kind, sympathetic and understanding, not like the hymns that threatened brimstone and fire.

“Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,  
Weak and wounded, sick and sore,  
Jesus ready stands to save you,  
Full of pity, love and power.  
I will arise and go to Jesus,  
He will embrace me in his arms.  
In the arms of my dear Savior,  
Oh, there are ten thousand charms.”

In quiet parlor courtings, a boy and girl would often outwit the “old folks” (the parents), or thought they did, by silently pointing out phrases in hymns that expressed their ardor, one for the other, or making marks with a finger or pencil in the air to spell out the needed word as, say, “In the arms of my dear Charlie (Lucy)/Oh there are ten thousand charms.” But the old folks were not outwitted. They knew, for they had done the same in their youth.

as *comfortable* as an old shoe

*comforter*

A thickly padded cotton quilt. A strong lover. Also Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

*coming*

Right away, at once. “Hey you, John!” — “Coming!”

Developing, growing, waxing in power. “He’s a coming man in this state — you watch.”

*commencing to*

Beginning, starting. “It’s commencing to rain.”

*common*

Usual, ordinary, as expected. “I’m well as common.”

Genial, unpretentious. “I met President Eisenhower at the White House, and he was just as common as anybody.”

as *common* as dirt

A handful of *common* sense is worth a bushel of learning.

*Communion*

A religious ritual and observance, the sacrament of the Eucharist, the celebration of the Lord's Supper when wine is drunk and bread is eaten in memory of that ancient occasion. The most orthodox and devout believers maintain that in the mystic process of the ritual the wine actually turns to blood and bread to flesh — these being of Christ Jesus himself. This has always struck me as a most horrible and cannibalistic contention. But as St. Thomas says, one has to believe the unbelievable if his faith is to be truly tested.

Present *company* always excepted.

Two's *company*, three's a crowd.

*to keep company with*

To court, to accompany.

You're known by the *company* you keep.

*Comparisons* are odious.

*Compassion* will do more than passion.

Whoever shall *compel* thee to go with him a mile, go with him twain.

*complected*

Complexioned, the coloring of one's skin. "He's a dark-complected man."

*Compliment* another's wife,  
Put in danger your own life.  
(A proverb.)

*Compliments* cost nothing.

*compost heap*

It used to be the custom for the farmers to build large piles of compost in their fields during the late winter and early spring months for distributing in the furrows when planting time came. These piles were made of stable and barnyard manure in which cottonseed and some commercial fertilizer were mixed. It often went through a heat after being put into piles — usually rectangular and flat-shaped, waist or shoulder high — and then was ready for distribution. Often in the early morning I have seen a foggy smoke rising from these heaps, and it was all a part of a beautiful world to me. The only untoward thought was that before long I would have to be helping put out the stuff from heavy baskets, distributing it by hand.

*con*

A confidence man, a convict.

Be not wise in your own *conceit*.

As full of *conceit*

As an egg is of meat.

Egotistical, self-proud.

*concern*

Business, an undertaking. "He's opening a hardware concern in Lillington."

*Confederate monument*

After the Civil War and as soon as funds could be got together from a pretty-much wrecked economy, every town of any size in the South put up its Confederate monument. Nearly always this monument took the form of a single Confederate soldier, holding his rifle or musket and most often facing north toward the enemy. For years and years on Confederate Memorial Day gatherings would be held and Southern patriotic speeches made at the monuments. And if a brass band was available, "Dixie" would be played with a whooping-up effect. The custom has died out but the soldiers still keep their motionless vigil. Perhaps the best known of these monuments is the one on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The students have named it "Silent Sam," and for years in all their fraternity initiations and other cuttings up they have never molested Sam. Their respect perhaps is due somewhat to a sense of the tragedy he represents. I hope so.

An honest *confession* is good for the soul.

*confound it!*

A mild expletive.

*confounded*

Odious, pesky, beastly. "That confounded dog wee-weed on my little boxwood and killed it."

*congress*

To defecate, to void, to answer the call of nature.

Often when we fellows were working in the fields, one of us would like as not on occasion speak out and say, "I've got to go to congress." And therewith he would disappear into the bushes to attend his natural needs. It was only in later years when I was working on a people's drama for the Washington, D.C. sesquicentennial and doing research on the history of the United States Congress that I found the source of this usage. During the latter days of the Revolutionary War, that lawmaking body had become so ineffectual and empty-handed that vulgar aspersions were cast upon it,

and so the term got into common folk parlance. None of us who used the word in the old days in the Valley saw any connection between it and our national body of representatives. We had accepted it as a matter of course without pedigree from our parents and they from parents before them. Recently I heard Mr. Mac say he didn't misdoubt at all that the term would soon be coming back into prominence if things didn't change in Washington.

One day in Hollywood when I was talking to Will Rogers about a part in a picture I was writing for him, I mentioned the word and something of its history for he was always poking fun at the legislative body in his daily newspaper column. He gave his high whickering little laugh, chewed his gum violently an instant, and said, "That's about right, pardner, just about right."

*conk*

To strike on the head.

*conk out*

To faint, die, to quit. "Half way there my old Ford conked out on me, and I was stuck for the night."

*connections*

Relatives. "He was there at the funeral and all his connections."

*conniption*

Usually used as conniption fit, a hysterical performance.

He is the greatest *conqueror* who has conquered himself.

*Conscience* makes cowards of us all.

Let your *conscience* be your guide.

A good *conscience* is a soft pillow.

A good *conscience* is the best sleeping pill.

A guilty *conscience* needs no answer.

*Constant dripping* wears away a stone.

*constitutional*

A short spell of physical exercise for one's health. Every day Robert Frost, when he was staying with Professor Clifford Lyons, walked up and down Greenwood Road in Chapel Hill for his constitutional.

*consumption*

In earlier days one of the great killers along with pneumonia and typhoid fever of Valley people. The poor doctors had no real defense against it. Rest and fresh air were their only recommended medicines.

I remember as a boy that Negroes around Lillington, Angier and Buie's Creek set up some sort of settlement along the Cape Fear River. Consumption broke out among them, and they died in droves.

What a change today! Now this terrible killer, along with nearly all others except cancer, can be dealt with successfully, and cancer is gradually yielding. When we think of the progress medicine has made, including of course surgery, we can pick up a little hope that man on earth maybe will learn to control his passions and selfishness in other fields for the common good and will not destroy himself in a holocaust of fire or suffocating smog as now threatens.

### *contempered*

To act in contempt of. The judge looked sternly over his spectacles at the long yellow girl and said, "You say that again and I will declare that you have contempered this court. Now go ahead and tell how the attack occurred."

### *continental*

A useless thing, reference to the almost worthless value of the old timey coin or money. "He's not worth a continental." And often the expression is, "He's not worth a continental damn."

### *contraption*

A thing, a puzzle box.

### *contrarious*

Contrary, quarrelsome, inimical, ill-tempered, antisocial.

Plunkett Barksdale had all of these bad qualities and then some. He was a high-living fellow and inherited right much money from his daddy. Along in his old age, though, he changed his ways somewhat and joined the church here. Of course there was a lot of jubilation over that — at first there was. Like so many Scotchmen, Plunkett had a high temper and was mighty touchous. For some reason or other, some say it was over hogs, others over a land boundary, he quarreled with one of the elders or deacons named Merlin McTaggart. The two had a lawsuit before the J.P. (Justice of the Peace), and the case was decided against Plunkett. Later he attacked Merlin in the road one day with a stick and whipped him. Both men were had up in the church for fighting, and again the case was proved against Plunkett. The brethren waited on him and said he would have to publicly apologize to Merlin before he was allowed to return to good standing in the congregation. Plunkett said he wouldn't do it. And he didn't. He harbored a grudge against all the members from then on.

His spite took a funny shape. He joined the Catholic Church where, as he said, a man could drink now and then, dance if he wanted to, and get justice done him. But that wasn't all. He went around among some of his former cronies and organized a meeting. Now one of the members

happened to own the land close to Little Bethel Church, just to the other side of it. So Plunkett bought an acre and put him up a church of his own. It wasn't much of a building, but it was good enough for him and his followers and had a cross stuck up on the roof.

I don't guess it really was a Catholic Church. Plunkett just called it that to spite the Little Bethel Church folks. Anyway some few services were held there with him doing the reading, and it might have grown into something if it had stood long enough. Somebody burnt it down after a year or two. Soon after it burned Plunkett was taken down sick, some said from too much carousing and others said from the cold he caught the night his church burned and he overdid himself fighting the fire. He was taken with double pneumonia, and just before he died he called all his cronies in and said he wanted them not to grieve after him and be sad and mournful like most funerals and wakes. No, he wanted them to be joyful. He said he was ordering a keg of hard liquor and cherry bounce for them all and they must make merry before they carried him across the creek and buried him there where he had built his church. I suppose he still wanted to plague the Little Bethel church members, for his grave would be there where they could look out the window and see it all lonely and unjustly treated by itself. He bought a steel casket into which he was to be put, and a whole barrel of brandy was to be poured in around him to keep him pickled for generations. That would worry the deacons some and would bother that old teetotaler Merlin McTaggart no little to be singing his hymns there in the amen corner and looking through the window thinking of him out there in a sea of liquor.

Plunkett died and the funeral parlor people from Fayetteville put him in the casket, poured in the brandy and welded him up as instructed. Then the wake began, and what a wake it was! For a night and day his old companions drank and held watch over him! In the afternoon of the second day they started with the corpse toward the church here. The weather was bad for burying anybody, even Plunkett. A terrible flood of winter rain had fallen all mixed in with sleet, and when the burying party came to the creek they found the bridge washed away and gone. So they stopped and held a caucus. They were all pretty drunk and they came near to blows as to what to do. Finally they decided to go down the stream a little way where some trees had been blown across the run in the year of the hurricane and try to make their way across with the body. So they did. What with the sleet on the slippery logs and their being half-drunk, they fell into the creek, casket and all. The bank was steep there and a lot of jagged rocks stuck out from the sides. The casket fell against some of these rocks and rolled down into the water. For a while it seemed Plunkett would be washed down the stream and into the Cape Fear River, but with a lot of shouting and hullabaloo they finally got him up the bank on the other side. Then they found that the casket had been cracked from the rough handling and a gush of fine

brandy was pouring out. For a while they tried to stop up the leak. But finally seeing it couldn't be done and the brandy would be wasted, they decided that Plunkett wouldn't mind. So they fell to catching it in their hats and drinking it like pigs. When the brandy was all leaked out or drunk up, they started on toward the churchyard and where they had been half-drunk before they were all roaring drunk now. And they sang all kinds of ballads and dirty songs as they staggered along.

When they got to the burial place with the casket they hardly knew B from bull's foot. So they dug Plunkett's grave and buried him but not straight east and west as decent people should be buried but slanchindicular, catty-cornered like, that is contrarious, as you might say. And maybe this was a fitting thing to do, seeing that he was so like that in life.

Later there was talk of digging Plunkett up and moving him. But for one reason or another it was put off, and finally the whole thing was forgot and today trees and bushes cover the unmarked place where he lies.

### *contrary*

Ill-humored. "They say that old beggar man, Good, was one of the most contrary scoundrels you ever met with."

To oppose or irritate. "It's better not to contrary a sick person."

### *contrivance*

A contraption, a gadget, a thing.

In an interview once with Eddie Rickenbacker's mother in Hollywood, she told me that as a boy Eddie worked hours and hours and days and days and on into the nights on his perpetual motion contrivance, and one day he got it going, "and the whole thing run away with him and busted out of the shed." In doing the picture, 20th-Century-Fox had a perpetual motion contrivance built, but it never turned out to be much of a thing other than something queer and outlandish to photograph. After a pile of money was spent for it we threw it away.

### *conversion*

A change from nature to grace, from a worldly condition to a spiritual one, according to the Valley preachers and others. It was and is a common religious belief that when a baby is born, even that tiny helpless one is in a sinful state and if it should perish as is, its future existence in yonder world would be terrible indeed. I understand that this is the view of the Pope and the Catholic Church, cruel and irrational as it seems. The evangelical preachers work hard, especially at revivals or "protracted meetings," to clean up the contaminated souls round and about and, through exhorting sermons and rending warning hymns, cause the sinner to experience a psychological and inner upheaval that leaves him with the feeling of being "cleansed," that is, converted.

I was never privileged to go through this experience, though as a little boy, under the push of an old preacher and to get him off my back, I pretended I had — that I had found grace and had cast away my sinful nature.

One of the most striking conversions I ever heard of happened to a soldier from the Valley — a private in the Confederate Army. The account was given me by an old Confederate veteran. Let us call him Joe.

Joe had deserted, was recaptured and sentenced to die. There had been a lot of desertions in the long, grinding struggle around Petersburg, and General Lee, good man that he was, said it had to stop. So that's the way it was.

Now the sergeant in charge of the death detail that was to take Joe out and shoot him had been a Baptist preacher in the Valley and one of the best. Call him Henry.

So strong had been Henry's feeling about the injustice done the South by the Yankee North that he enlisted early in the cause and, preacher or not, went to the battlefield r'aring to fight. So the old veteran told me.

Now Joe found out somehow that Henry was a preacher and, standing there in the edge of the field with his hands tied, he begged the sergeant to give him another chance. But Henry said he had to be shot. It was General Lee's orders. Joe was a devious fellow, according to what was told me, and he upped with an argument.

"You're a preacher, ain't you, sergeant?" said Joe, half-weeping.

"I am that," replied the sergeant, "and a good one if I do say it myself."

"And I'm a poor low-down sinner," sniveled Joe.

"You are and no doubt of that," said Henry, "considering the way you've treated General Lee. Get ready to die."

"But I ain't ready," said Joe, and he began to howl. Henry ordered his detail to line up, and he pulled out a white handkerchief of cloth to tie over Joe's eyes. Joe's howls suddenly stopped and he called out piteously, "You love your Jesus, don't you, suh?"

"I do that," said the sergeant, "and him crucified for our sins," and he lifted his eyes confidently toward heaven.

"And Jesus said have mercy, have mercy, he said — and he said have mercy, didn't he?" blubbered Joe.

"True our Savior said blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy," said Henry.

"Ezzactly," said Joe.

"But he weren't talking about deserters," the sergeant declared.

"How you know he weren't?" said Joe, and his voice was a little sharp as he lifted his tied hands and with their backs scrubbed the tears from his eyes. His voice hardened a bit more as he went on. "I'm a terrible sinner. My soul is black with sin — making liquor back home, gambling, running with women, and you just can't send me into the hereafter to burn in hell



forevermore. You can't, you can't!" And now his voice was heartrending in its begging. Henry lowered his head and stared at the ground. Joe went on. "I tell you I been the turblest sinner they is. I ain't never been converted in no church — never nowhere. My folks was low-down. They never give me no chance." And he began to sob loudly. Henry kept looking at the ground. Here was a bind. True, it was bad enough for Joe to be shot but for his soul to be sent to burn forever in a fire seven times hotter than any on earth — that was maybe a bit rough. He hadn't been thinking of that. The sergeant turned aside and held a short silent prayer, seeking God's help. Some sort of answer must have come and come quickly. He turned back and asked Joe if he knew any religious hymn of any sort. Joe studied and then said 'way back at the big meetings folks used to sing "Come to Jesus."

"Exactly what we want," said Henry. And he led off in the song.

"Come to Jesus, Come to Jesus,  
Come to Jesus just now.  
He will save you, He will save you,  
He will save you just now."

Joe sang along as best he could, and some of the guard joined in. Soon they were all singing and clapping their hands.

"Jesus loves you, Jesus loves you,  
Jesus loves you just now."

With the hymn finished and everybody feeling some effect from it, Henry took from his pocket a little Bible which he always carried and read a bit about Jesus suffering on the cross and saying to one of the thieves crucified with him that "this day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Then Henry began to preach, and if he had preached powerful sermons before, never had he preached one equal to the one he put forth for this condemned man's salvation, said the old soldier. He unrolled the glories of heaven and the horrors of hell. Before long he had Joe on his knees hollering for the Lord to save him, and one or two of the more sinful members of the guard were likewise calling for help though not so loudly as Joe. Then the preacher's voice became gentle and consoling. He spoke of the great love Jesus had for this erring one, and there in heaven at this minute, standing by the throne of God, he was reaching out his arms saying, "Come, Joe, come, and I will give you rest. Come, Joe, come, and lay your weary head upon your Savior's breast."

And the sergeant went on like this for a long while. He dropped down on his knees by Joe and put his arms around him, saying, "Jesus loves you, Joe, and I love you. Yea, you are precious in his sight and precious in my sight. Come to Jesus, come now."

This finally was too much for Joe. His hard, sinful soul melted like

cold molasses in a hot sun. He jumped to his feet presently and began hopping around, shouting out the glad news that salvation had come to him. He felt Jesus in his heart. "Hallelujah, hallelujah!" he yelled.

"Hallelujah," answered the sergeant.

"Hallelujah!" called the guard and one of them spoke a few words of unknown tongues, so stirred up he was.

It was a long while before they were able to quiet Joe down. Finally his shouting stopped and so did the holy jerks that had seized him for awhile. He stood there with the tears of peace pouring from his eyes, his face shining. The sergeant took the white cloth and wiped the tears lovingly away, then hugged him to his breast again and kissed him on the cheek. He now gently but firmly bound the white cloth, somewhat wet in places from Joe's tears, over the condemned man's eyes. He led him a few paces away, stepped aside and gave a high, wild cry, "Ready, aim, fire!"

The muskets sounded, and Joe's soul went to its Savior — or didn't.

And the sergeant-preacher went back to camp feeling satisfied. He had accomplished several things of which he was proud. Never had he preached a better sermon. Much of it he could use again back home. He had saved another soul and sent it straight to the bliss of heaven, a place where in certain scarce moments he wished to be. And he had served as best he could the great commander he worshipped next to God.

*Convince* a man against his will,  
He's of the same opinion still.

*coo* like a dove

*coob up*

Coop up.

*cook breakfast with a snowball*

This was a well-known crack of Professor Horace Williams to his philosophy class. Often he would ask an unsuspecting student if he believed that God was all-powerful, and, of course, the orthodox answer would always come back that he, the student, did believe the deity was not only all-powerful but omniscient and omnipresent. Then Professor Williams would chuckle and ask the student if he thought the all-powerful God could cook breakfast with a snowball.

The class would break into gales of laughter. Everybody knew that God couldn't because the snowball would melt. Still there were some orthodox ones in arguments after the class dismissed who maintained stoutly that all things were possible with God, for the Bible said so.

*cookie*

A person. "I'll tell you, that Joe Aiken is a smart cookie."

*cooking*

Things going on, activity, bustle, much to-do. "What's cooking, Bud?"

*cooking hot*

A ruttish, sex-hungry person.

*cooking on all four burners*

To be doing exceedingly well, also of a motor that's running well.

*cook one's goose*

To ruin, kill, defeat, to settle one's hash.

*cook room*

The kitchen, where the cook stove is.

Too many *cooks* spoil the broth.

*cook-woman*

A cook.

*cook up*

To fabricate, to invent. "He cooked up the whole story about President Roosevelt and that woman."

*cool*

Clever, careful, debonair. "He plays it cool."

To emphasize a figure or an amount or fact. "That McLean boy made a cool million playing the stock market, and when he lost it he jumped off that water tower and busted his brains out."

*cool* as a cucumber

*cooler*

The jailhouse, the cell. "That fellow cussed out the judge, and the next thing he knowed he was in the cooler."

A galvanized container, usually of some two-gallon capacity, used to lower into a well for cooling milk.

*cooling board*

In the old days a dead person was laid out on a wide board for the body to cool more quickly and to help preserve it if the weather was hot.

*cooling-pit*

A pit dug under or near the dwelling house for keeping milk, butter, watermelons, etc. cool in hot weather.

*cool one's heels*

To wait interminably, to be put off.

*cool one's saddle*

To rest, to dismount.

*coon*

A derogatory Southern term for a Negro man.

To go like a raccoon, move on all fours. "The only way to get across on that log is to coon it."

*coon muddle*

Brunswick stew.

*coon oysters*

Poor grade of oysters that grow in muddy water and usually are exposed at low tide. They are easily reached by raccoons and, therefore, the name.

*coon's age*

A long time. According to Dr. W.D. Weatherford of Black Mountain, a coon's age means fourteen years. "I ain't seen you in a coon's age."

*cooshee (coosheep)*

A call to sheep.

*coot*

A foolish fellow.

*cooter*

A land turtle. It is supposed that when a cooter bites you he won't turn loose until it thunders.

*cootie*

A body louse. Also a low-down fellow.

*cop*

To take, to seize, to win. "He copped first place in the midget car race."

*cop caller*

Squealing brakes.

*a copper*

One cent, sometimes referred to as a "copper cent."

*copperas*

One teaspoonful a week per sick hog will insure a cure.

*copper cent*

A trifle, a worthless item. "He ain't worth a copper cent, he's so lazy."

*copper-toed shoes*

One of the proudest moments of my life as a boy was when my father

bought me a pair of copper-toed shoes. We boys were so devoted to playing marbles that kneeling on the ground around the shooting ring we scuffed out the toes of our shoes unmercifully. The copper strip took care of this — at least for a long while. I put my new shoes pridefully on and stomped braggingly about the house. My mother asked me to go to the woodpile and get some lightwood splinters to start a fire in the stove for supper. Out I went quick to obey. Splitting the splinters I struck my foot with the blade of the axe and cut one of my big toes half off. I fled into the house with cries of grief, not for my bleeding toe — I didn't notice that — but for my ruined shoe. "Look what I've done to my new shoe, Momma! Look, look!" I shrieked. "Yes, and look what you've done to your old toe," she answered back. "Mary, bring me a piece of cloth, quick, quick!"

*copy-cat*

An imitator.

*cord bed*

A bed with cords attached to the side rails on which the mattress is placed instead of its being placed on slats.

*core*

The clay center of an earth dam.

*corker*

First rate, admirable.

*cornball*

A dull, stupid person.

*corn basket*

A basket made of split white oak withes for handling corn in the ear.

*corn cob*

Often the farmer's toilet paper.

*corn dodger*

Cornbread in the form of a flat cake, a sort of dumpling made of cornmeal and boiled in a pot with ham and cabbage or in ham and cabbage pot liquor.

*cornering*

A deep gash cut in the tree or the cutting of the corners in turpentine farming so the resin will better run into the boxes.

*cornfed*

Well-fed, especially strong and good of fiber and stamina. "These hogs are all cornfed and their meat is solid as you please."

*cornfield hand*

A common hired hand, usually a Negro, somewhat different and of lower status than a house servant. The only thing standing between him and want and the grave is his own physical strength, his muscles and brawn.

*cornmeal poultices*

These were in common use for any sort of ache or pain. The cornmeal was made into a dough, heated and put into a sugar sack or old stocking and placed on the place that hurt. Heated salt in a bag was also good.

*cornshucking*

An old-timey custom which has pretty much gone out of style in recent years, what with the mechanizing of the farms with tractors, seeders, harvesting combines and the like. In the old days when late October or early November came on, the farmers would haul the corn in the shuck from the fields, pile it in a horseshoe-shaped mounding around the barn door, and invite their neighbors in to help shuck it. This was always a joyous and festive occasion, and the housewives would cook up a storm of ham, barbecue, beef stew, chicken pastry, pies, cakes, biscuits, and a multitude of things for good eating and fun. The shuckers usually ate in sequent groups — the oldest men first and the younger and yearling fellows last. Sometimes after the supper feeding was over, the girls would come out to the cornpile and find their respective sweethearts and snuggle down beside them and pretend to help shuck corn. After that, of course, the falling of the shucked ears toward the barn door slackened down considerably. Now and then someone would find a red ear, and then a forfeit — or better, a reward — of a kiss would be taken by the lucky fellow to the merriment and good spirits of all.

I used to look forward to a cornshucking with keen delight. And one I'll never forget, for a girl was connected with it. I still can see her face, now perished and gone. She was the sweetest thing under the sun. Yes, for awhile she was. Not an apple in old Squire Johnson's orchard could equal her, none was as red as her cheeks. And my thoughts were wild and lyrical about her.

I would plow in the fields all day with her nestling in my mind, sweeter than honey in the comb. But she didn't know it, didn't know that I was crazy about her. Such a fool I was in those days, timid and scary as a fly. I would go to Little Bethel Church and sit at the back listening to her play the organ. There she'd be with her head lifted, singing and playing, her face alight like an angel. What for me then was the preacher's thundering? What did I care about fire and damnation and the crackling of thorns that might threaten and mock me?

Sometimes she'd pass along the lane, visiting a girl down the road. I'd be out in the fields spreading the stinking compost or cutting cornstalks,

and the sight of her pink dress coming around the bend would send my heart up in my throat with a sharp ache. And if someone casually mentioned her name, a sweet thrill would shoot along my spine and down painfully by way of my saddle into my toes.

I thought about her, dreamed about her, and the year I was seventeen I began to make plans. Breaking our old stiff bottom land with a heavy two-horse plow, I would ponder in my mind some things I'd do. Before long I'd get up courage and maybe ask her to go riding Sunday. And then before long, you watch me, my mule (and oh, if it only were a horse!) would be tied at her yard fence at least one night a week.

That spring went by, the summer came, and I still had no date with her. Once or twice — choked in a high collar of those days, my new bow tie crossed pretty nice and my glass scarfpin shining like a peeping sun — I had spoken to her at church and commented upon the weather or whatever popped into my foolish mind. The merry quick look out of her dark eyes and the tilt of her brown head crucified me with joy. I could never come near such a wonder.

Along with my loving that summer I took up reading in deep earnest, for I knew she liked reading. She had been the brightest scholar in our country school. By josh, I'd up and do something, I would. And some of these days — well — some of these days. I read a poetry book, by a man named Haywood, up at Raleigh, novels by E.P. Roe and Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth. And through the last-named amorous lady my feelings ran amuck. Fool, fool, why couldn't I get up courage to ask her for a date? She was sixteen and old enough.

Then, lo and behold, on a Sunday following some of my mournful musings, she went by in the lane, swift as an arrow, sitting with Judd Hockaday behind his fast race horse. Misery, misery! That long lonesome Sunday afternoon I sat in the woods on a log with a stub of pencil and a sheet of paper, pouring out my soul in poetry. The red bugs and seed ticks did their work on my crotch and thighs, but I paid little mind.

“If the high mountains and the deep sea  
Loosed their power and wrath on me,  
'Twould not be like the pain I feel.  
Bring me your balm, love, my heart heal.”

There were fifteen verses as good as that. Then in the gray of the twilight I went home somewhat eased, scratching and itching but somewhat eased. Art hath its compensations, even as the philosopher declared. Why couldn't I be a poet? I might. A great writer. I straightened up. Another thought came to me — I might send this poem to her. Why not?

By josh, she might like that. She would. I bet she didn't know I had it in me. It was good, if I did say it myself. I pulled it out and read it again,

walking along the road in the gloom.

“I looked at the birds and looked at the sky,  
And hated to think my love would die.  
I looked at the moon and looked at the sun  
And thought of my love till day was done.”

Out of my misery came the poem and out of that the decision to act. I put it in an envelope and mailed it to her, no letter or anything, just the poem. Then I waited. Part of my emotion was transferred to the mailman. The sound of his buggy in the lane thrilled me like the sight of her dress, but with a different sort of thrill, oh, yes, very different. But the days went by and nothing came. Lord, I'd ruined things. Of course she was mad. Anybody would get mad at such brass as that.

For weeks I suffered remorse and embarrassment. That poem! I wouldn't have her know who wrote it for anything. But too late now. In the days that followed, even a thought of it and my goose-foolishness would redden my face and cause beads of sweat to pop out on my forehead.

I was out in the barn lot one afternoon in October when her little brother came by riding their black mule.

“Heigh,” said the brother.

“Heigh,” said I.

“Gonna shuck corn tomorrow night and want you all to come,” the ruffian said, letting loose a squirt of tobacco juice at the gate and eyeing me sternly. Lightning-like visions and plans raced through my mind as I stood in my tracks.

“Can you come?”

“Some of us'll be there,” I answered gravely, as slow and deliberate as a taciturn Indian.

With a mocking look below his stubby red hair the boy soused his heels in the flanks of the old mule and sent her grunting down the road. I'd be there if torment — if hell didn't freeze over.

I watched my time, and the next afternoon when everybody was out of the house I slipped in and got my daddy's razor and took my first shave. Uhp, there's a cut. Nothing much though. Other boys with cuts on their chin — I'd heard them say so casual-like, “My razor slipped this morning.” I slicked down my hair and put on my suit and stood ready to ride. As a last measure I sprayed myself plentiful with my sister's cologne. Then I hitched up my father's mule and drove through the country, feeling fit and ready as a man of God.

The cornshucking was in full swing when I got there. Young men, old men and boys were sitting and squatting around the horseshoe pile. In the dusk the shucked ears were pouring over toward the open barn door like a thick swarm of plunging bats.



"Heigh, you, bring your shucking-peg?" called Laughing Gus Brown.

"Got ten of 'em," I answered.

"Well, come over here, Sunday clothes, and fall to it."

I took my place among the sweaty overalls and ragged hats. Out of my vest pocket I fished my shucking-peg, made of the hardest dogwood, seasoned by sun and fires, and coming to a fine point at the end. In a few minutes I was ripping the shucks open and shooting the ears over with the best of them. On and on we shucked, ear by ear, nubbin after nubbin, throwing the shuck behind with one hand and reaching forward for another ear with the other. And all the while there was a low drumming and seedy spattering of the corn ears falling always toward the crib.

Evening was coming on. Presently Gus let out a whoop.

"The man who gets through the pile first finds a silver dollar! How 'bout it, Mr. Mac?"

"Dunno," Mr. McLaughlin answered from up the line. He was a dour farmer and not so free with his money.

"Uh-uh!" said Laughing Gus, winking at me. "That got him where the hair's short."

All the time I was thinking about the girl in the house, seeing her in my mind as she helped arrange the table, dishing up the stew and all the fine things to eat. It was almost time for supper now. The fields out by the barn were growing dim, and the open door to the hayloft above was a square of blackness, and looked lonesome. I gazed up at the sky and saw that the stars were coming out. The sky looked lonesome too. That was a trait I had — when I thought of something sweet and happy, I thought of something lonesome. One feeling seemed to bring the other.

"Le's sing some," I said timidly to Laughing Gus. "Sam and Tim's here."

"That's right, music in place of the dollar," said he. "Heigh, Tim, you and Sam come over here."

Sam and Tim and Gus and I had been singing as a country quartet now for some time — 'round at cornshuckings, ice cream suppers and parties and the like. We sure could make music, as everybody said.

Presently Tim and Sam left their places and came around. We made room for them.

"How're you?" queried Tim.

"What shall it be?" said Sam, dumping his tobacco wad in his hand and throwing it behind him.

I was a sort of leader and knew more tunes than they.

"Oh, anything," I answered. "What would you like?"

"Sing about poor Omi," old Yen Yarborough spoke up in his chair a few paces away. Old Yen liked music, and he especially liked that mournful piece. He'd seen a lot of trouble in his time and now was dying from a bad

sore on his nose. Try doctors, herbs, salves, all that he might, including Miss Zua Smith's powerful plasters — nothing did him any good. But he still kept cheerful.

"Poor Omi it shall be," said Sam with his bass.

Thereupon we cleared our throats and settled our knees more firmly in the bed of shucks.

"Ta-la-la-la," said Tim, setting the chord. He was the first tenor and a good one.

"Do, sol, mi, do," growled Sam.

Then we let loose a harmony that shattered the twilight air and trembled the cobwebs in the hayloft. Out, around and upward we sent the lady's plaintive story.

"O pity, O pity! pray spare your babe's life,  
And I will deny it and not be your wife.  
No pity, no pity, no pity have I,  
In yonder Deep River your body shall lie."

How we did make it chord, all with queer minor and mode! And when we'd reached the end where the poor lady's body, by desperate deed foredone, is found in the river and the guilty George Lewis is captured and bound down in chains, there were grunts of approval and scattered clapping of hands on all sides.

"That sure is a piece," mused Laughing Gus.

Then through the cool October evening I heard a voice that thrilled me to the bone.

"Come on in to supper, you all." She was outside the lot fence with some other girls.

"Come on to supper."

The fellows around the cornpile craned their necks around, snickered and stirred with enlivenment. The old men would eat first, and seven or eight of them soon rose, dusted the corn silks from their clothes and went on toward the gate.

"We need four more," old Yen called back.

"Go on to supper, Tom."

"No, you go, Dave."

"Why, I ain't hungry a bit in the world."

"Charlie, you go."

"No, you go. The old come first. Hee-hee!"

"Pshaw! Looks before age!"

"Since you ain't got 'em, you need sump'n to eat!"

"Allen, you go."

And finally four middle-aged fellows followed the old ones to supper. The young girls in their white dresses and ribbons clustered around like

beautiful butterflies beyond the fence.

"There she is," and Laughing Gus punched me in the side.

But I went on with my shucking seemingly as cold and indifferent as the old dummy that lived by the creek.

"You gals come over here and help us shuck this corn!" three or four voices called.

The group of girls beyond the fence were suddenly animated with a flurry of motion, and there were giggles and whispers among them. Finally little Cissy Tatum, who had a tongue like a scorpion's tail, shrilled out, "Who's that all dressed up there in his wedding garments?"

A great shout went up around the cornpile, and I felt my face grow hot as fire.

"Come here, little Black-Eyes, and hold its hand!" cried Gus who seemed to have gone crazy in his head. "Bring your han'kcher and an'int it, for she smells like the Queen of Sheby."

Sam, who had covered many a bar of balladry with me, suddenly rolled over on his back and wallowed among the shucks with joy. He let out little puffing squeals of merriment.

If only the ground would open and swallow me up, or if I might but burrow my way deep under the corn shucks and hide myself from all human eyes! I remembered foolishly that Enos walked with God and was not, for God took him. And so was it with Elijah. I looked up at the sky and wished, as the Negroes sang — wisht I had-a wings for to fly. Then the girls went away, and she called back over her shoulder, "We'll all come and help you after supper."

"Do," shouted Gus, "and a kiss for every red ear!"

"How about the Springfield Mountain piece?" I stammered out to Tim who never laughed at anybody or anything. He was a solemn soul, he was. As long as I lived I had never known him to laugh. But Tim had fun, plenty of it, till he died in France.

"All right," he muttered.

And he lifted up his voice.

"In Springfield Mountain there did dwell  
A handsome youth, I knowed him well.  
'Twas Deacon Jones' only son—  
When he was only twenty-one—"

Ah, that was a piece! — And Tim's high tenor was clear and sweet as a bell. We three joined in—

"One Monday morning he did go  
Out in the field some hay to mow.  
He sca'ce had mowed half o'er the field,

When a venomous blacksnake bit him on the heel—  
—Sing umble-bumble and a skiddy and a bumble  
And a mozi-linkum too.

“He killed that snake and in his hand  
He took it quick to Molly Ann—  
Says he to Moll, ‘Jist look and see  
What venomous blacksnake has bit me!’  
—Sing umble-bumble, etc.

“Says Moll to him, ‘Why did you go  
Out in the field, some hay to mow?’  
Says he to Moll, ‘I thought you knowed  
Your pappy’s hay it must be mowed.’  
—Sing umble-bumble, etc.

“Then Moll she kissed his wounded limb  
And sucked the pizen out’n him.  
But Molly had a rotten tooth,  
And so the pizen took them both.  
—Sing umble-bumble, etc.

“And then they died, gave up the ghost  
And went to join the heavenly host.  
And both cried out as up they went,  
‘Confound that devil of a sarpeint!’  
—Sing umble-bumble,” etc.

Handclappings and whistlings of appreciation sounded forth when we finished. “What a piece!” said Tim.

Soon the old men came back, and it was the turn of the young fellows to go to supper.

We shuffled on through the darkness and crowded around the pump outside the dining room. There we washed up with strong homemade soap and dried our hands and faces on towels hanging from the limbs of a pecan tree. The young girls hovered about in the gloom and waited upon us as if we had been lords.

“Here’s some soap, Charlie,” one said shyly to her husky sweetheart.

“And here’s a towel,” said another.

“Hurry up there,” the sharp voice of Miz McLaughlin called from the kitchen.

Through the lighted window of the parlor I could see other girls playing the organ and singing, and two or three were sitting on the lounge looking through the family albums. Time would hang heavy on their hands until the boys were through at the cornpile. Like a herd of goats we fellows tramped

in through the dining room and seated ourselves at the table.

Mr. McLaughlin was noted for his closeness, but he hadn't failed to provide on this occasion. No farmer does. The table was loaded down with chicken stew, ham, collards, early pork, beef stew and steak, biscuits, muffins, cornbread, potato pie and custards and cakes, and goodness knows what all. Two or three stolid Negro women moved about the room, handing the dishes on. And over it all Miz McLaughlin, with face as dried as a bean root, watched with hawk-like eye. She was a stingy one, no doubt, but she did urge everybody to help himself. If she cared for her rations, as it was said, she was due to suffer this night. And so we began. I being so timid, and with my mind on something else, like a fool got a whole plateful of collards from the first Negro woman. I hated "greens" above all things, and in a few minutes my appetite was gone. It looked like a grimace of pleasure on the hostess' face when I soon had to say "no" to a proffered dish of stew.

After a few minutes the girl came in and shyly spoke to Sam.

"Are you going to play for us?" she said.

"We are if we can tote our vittles," he answered.

A bit longer she stayed in the room and then went off along the porch toward the parlor. Not once had I looked up at her, but sat bent over my plate diddling with the hated greens, feeling her presence suffocatingly around me.

Back at the cornpile we shucked and shucked. Presently the cold moon came up behind the barn and peered in our faces. Gus suggested another song, but I, who had grown mournful, said I didn't feel like it.

"And Sam's not here, anyhow," I said.

I was waiting and hoping she would come. Well, if she did, she'd go and sit with somebody, not me, of course. The corn was dwindling away under our onslaught, we'd be through in a few minutes. Then I heard the knock of the latch in the gate and the shout that went up around the pile told me the girls were there. Through the corner of my eye I saw them come in. My heart pounded in my ribs and nearly stifled me, but I kept at my task, erect and with the gravity of that same old aforesaid Indian. I saw them settle themselves here and there along the pile with their different sweethearts. Ah, it was all so foolish anyhow. I didn't care, I didn't. Why'n thunder had I dressed up like a fool? Then a cool voice spoke up behind me.

"Let me sit with you." she said.

I gripped the ear I was shucking. "There's some room here," I answered casually, making a place for her.

"Un-uh," Gus snorted, "red ears, where are you hiding?" And he went on making funny remarks, but I heard nothing now. Here she was, right here beside me, and she chose me before the rest. My head was swimming and all the fine speeches I had planned were lost in a hazy dreaminess. Bless

the lord if a sort of sleepiness didn't soon come over me. What ailed me anyhow? Then I felt her soft hand against mine among the shucks. She was reaching for an ear maybe, sure that was all. We shucked away in silence. She would say nothing either. Once Gus stuck a red ear at me.

"Now's your chance," he said. But I made no reply and Gus threw the ear scornfully toward the barn.

"How's everything at your house?" she finally said.

"All right." I wanted to talk out and laugh and cut up like the others, but something weighed me down like lead. I was happy, but something weighed me down. Once or twice she looked at me intently and then presently shivered and stood up. "It's cold here and I better get my fascinators," she said. She went out through the gate, and Laughing Gus lay back and roared with glee.

"What's all the fun?" a neighbor queried.

"The cat's got the bridegroom's tongue," he cackled.

Now if I but had a sledgehammer or something I'd kill that Laughing Gus Brown. I wouldn't mind caving his head in, not a bit in this world. A flood of wretchedness came over me. I was the biggest fool that ever wore shoes, no doubt of it. Well, out I would go.

And I did. I stumbled up and went toward the lot gate. I would go home and go to bed where I belonged. Catcalls and merry gibes followed me out and cut me to the quick. With a sob in my throat I went toward the fence where my mule was tied. I began hitching him to the buggy. As I was ready to drive off, she came out of the gloom with her shawl around her.

"Where you going?" she asked.

"They're about through now and I'd better go on."

"Don't go, we're going to play and have some music in a little bit."

"I better leave," I muttered, but I stood making no move.

She came closer and laid her hand on my arm. "That was the sweetest poem you sent me."

"Oh, Lord!" I gasped.

She looked at me with great admiring eyes. "You're smart as you can be." She stammered and looked down. "You know, I wrote several letters about it, but I was afraid to send 'em. You're so — proud and standoffish. You are."

"Good gracious alive!" I said. Mechanically I tied the mule again and stood by her silent. There were no words to be had now. Fool!

"The moon's so beautiful," she murmured, "let's go walking down the lane. We'll come right back."

We went along and soon she put her hand in my arm the way I'd read in books. "The wheel ruts make hard walking — so," she said.

"I'll write you some more, Nan," I said with some confidence now.

"Oh, do, and I'll try to send you a letter some of these days," she added.

"Oh, do," I whispered.

The moon looked down with smiling face, and the fields lay wide and peaceful on either side. There in the hedgerow the flowers stood dead and sore from the early frost. The yarrow that Achilles knew held up its blistered hands, and the proud old mullein nodded its gray fuzzy head at us from the shadowy fence jambs.

"It's a beautiful night," she murmured again. "Look at the man in the moon!"

"And everything all around us," I answered foolishly and in a choking voice. At the turn of the lane we stopped and leaned against the fence. Presently she laid her hand on mine, and I caught it in a tight convulsive clutch.

"What's the matter?" she whispered. I looked at her with shining eyes. "Oh, me," she cried. And I put my arms gently around her then.

"That's all right, that's all right," I kept saying. For a long while I held her so. Then a few words came stammering through my lips. "I've been thinking a whole lot. I'm gonna do something in this world, gonna be something somehow. I'll do it, do it for you, you wait and see. They can laugh at me — I don't care — I'll—"

"They don't laugh at you." She leaned her head timidly against my shoulder and I kissed her fabulous hair once.

"Let's go back," she said as if afraid. And I could feel her tremble. For a while we stood there, and then hand in hand we went up the lane toward the house. The music had already begun, the fiddle and banjo ringing out through the night. Boys and girls could be seen having fun on the porch. Near the barn I stopped and gestured around with a quick sweep of my arm.

"You know, I'm going to do something."

"Yes, you will."

"I'm gonna write about all these things, make poems and such — tell 'em how purty — how beautiful it is—"

I let go her hand and we went on toward the house and toward our future together — as I foolishly believed.

With a *cornstalk* fiddle and a shoestring bow,  
Off to court Miss Sallie I'm bound to go.  
(Nonsense rhyme.)

### *cornstalk flinger or thrower*

We boys used to cut a hole near the end of a length of a cornstalk, put a pebble in the hole and swing the cornstalk through the air with a sharp jerking motion, so the pebble would fly off at tremendous speed and to a great distance.

*Lord Cornwallis*

The brave, resourceful and intrepid commander of the British forces during the latter phase of the Revolutionary War. His name became a part of folklore of North Carolina. His march from Hillsborough at the north of the Valley to Wilmington and thence to the surrender at Yorktown was especially famous both historically and traditionally. Numerous Valley places were connected with his name. "Here's where Lord Cornwallis spent the night," "This is the road along which Cornwallis marched," and so on. The private home in Wilmington where he stayed has since been known only as the "Cornwallis House."

*corny*

Dull, stupid, vulgar.

*corporation*

A prominent belly. "In the Nero Wolfe stories, Archie is all the time referring to Nero's corporation."

*corpse bird*

A bird of foreboding and omens, the owl.

*corruption*

Pus. "That boil's full of corruption and ought to be lanced."

*cost free*

A redundancy meaning without cost, free, gratis.

*cotch*

Catch.

*cotton basket*

A basket usually woven from white oak withes, much like a corn basket, and used to pour the picked cotton in for weighing or emptying into the wagon body.

*cotton candy*

A frothy, bubbly candy usually on sale at fairs and circuses. Also nonsense, silly talk, sentimental stuff.

*cotton in one's ears*

It used to be a custom to wear cotton in the ears to keep from catching cold, also as a cure for earache.

*cotton-picking*

A term of disparagement. "Keep your cotton-picking fingers off my leg."

*cotton root tea*

A drink made from boiling cotton roots, supposed to be a prevention for



pregnancy. Many a colored woman has tried it and later woke up with "them pains just the same."

A *cottonstalk* too close to the weed  
Will find the hoe gives it no heed.

*cottontail*

A rabbit.

*cotton to*

Bow down to, pay subservience to, flatter unctuously.

*high cotton*

Fine spirits, easy doings, financially okay. "Since I bought myself that new Ford I'm in high cotton."

*low cotton*

To be melancholy, to have heavy feelings, to be down in the dumps, hard doings. "Since the finance company took my Ford away from me, I'm in low cotton."

*wrapped in cotton (wool)*

Well protected, petted, spoiled. "No wonder that fellow ain't no 'count, his mother always kept him wrapped in cotton."

*cough up*

To disclose, pay up, ante up, meet one's commitment.

*could be*

Perhaps so. "You say Dean Rusk is telling the truth about the war in Vietnam — could be."

*coulter*

A straight steel blade attached to the beam of a plough to cut the roots or ground in front of the point and wing. How often have I ploughed a newground with one of these coulter. We always called them jumping coulter because of their proclivity for hanging a root and then bouncing out of the ground. The root would come back against your naked shin, and for a moment the newground and the fields would echo with a wild wail of a persecuted boy.

Keep your own *counsel*.

In a multitude of *counsellors* there is safety.

*counter jumper*

A salesman in a drygoods store usually.

*counterpin*

Counterpane.

*counting out rhymes*

These are popular among children the world over, and each country, region or locality has its own. The rhymes are used to choose a player who is to be "It." The players sit in a circle on the floor or around a table and put out two fingers each. Then the speaker — one who has shouted out first or loudest for the privilege — counts or designates each of the players' extended fingers in turn as he speaks the rhyme, a syllable or beat for each finger. This counting out goes on until only one player is left and he is "It." The following were among our favorite counting-out rhymes in the Buie's Creek neighborhood.

Eenery meenery dippery dee,  
Delia dolya dominee,  
Hotcha potcha dominotcha  
Hiya pon tus.  
O-u-t spells out  
On your way home.

Eeny meeny miny mo,  
Catch a nigger by his toe,  
If he hollers let him go.  
Eeny meeny miny mo.  
O-u-t spells out  
On your way home.

William Trembletoe  
He's a good fisherman,  
Catches hens  
Now and then,  
Puts 'em in pens.  
Some lay eggs,  
Some don't.  
Wire brier limberlock  
Sit and sing till ten o'clock.  
The clock fell down,  
The mouse ran around.  
O-u-t spells out  
On your way home.

as *countless* as the stars

*count noses*

To check those present, sometimes to call the roll of the loyal ones as against the disloyal for some matter of concern or matter before the house.

*count on*

Rely on. "I'm counting on you to help me in a pinch."

To expect, estimate. "I didn't count on so many people showing up, so we're short of fried chicken."

*take the count*

To die, to be knocked out, to be made bankrupt.

*countrified*

Boorish, lacking in refinement, not citified.

*the country*

The outfield in baseball, also means pasture.

My *country*, right or wrong!

Very patriotic slogan.

*country cousin*

The boorish awkward side of the relatives, not fashionable or citified.

*country mile*

A long distance, longer than a mile.

*to go through the country*

To drive, to motor, as opposed to traveling on the train, or these days by plane.

*couple*

To copulate, to marry.

To hitch a horse or a team to a conveyance. "Son, go out to the barn and couple the mules to the wagon and we'll be ready to ride."

*coupling pole*

In the old days a four-wheeled wagon was held together with a coupling pole, usually a 2 x 4 white oak scantling. A bolt was inserted through the front end and attached to the middle of the axle. It reached back through the center of the rear axle and was bolted there likewise.

*course*

A line of bricks. Also the chop-markings along the side of a log for the broad-axe to hull off for making hewn logs.

The *course* of true love never runs smooth.

*Cousin Betty*

A madam, a keeper of a bawdy house.

*cover*

To get the draw on. How many little boys have darted out from a hedgerow with toy pistols in their hands and yelled to the unsuspecting passerby, "Hands up, I've got you covered." All part and parcel of the gun psychosis in these United States.

Usually refers to a male animal covering a female. "My stallion is available at ten dollars a cover." Sometimes, instead of the word cover, the word "leak" was used.

*coverled*

Coverlet.

*covers it*

To take in all phases of a question.

Thou shalt not *covet*.

*cow*

Woman.

to feed the *cow* to catch the calf

Pay attention to the mother to win her daughter.

better to be a *coward* than a corpse

better a live *coward* than a dead hero

*cowcumber*

Cucumber.

*cowdab*

A wad or dump of cow dung.

*cow doctor*

A sort of veterinarian. Usually in our neighborhood there was someone, an elderly man most often, who gradually got the reputation of being a cow doctor. And any time that any of the cows got into trouble, lost their cud or got belly swollen, the cow doctor was sent for. I remember one who used to come around. And sometimes when a cow had a swollen stomach, he would out with his long-bladed knife and stab a hole in it. "That lets the pizen wind out," he would say.

*cow dung*

Applied as an old-time remedy to cuts and burns.

*cowgrease*

Butter.

*cowhide*

To beat with a whip. "If that old beggar man, Good, comes around here again, I'm going to cowhide him from A to Z."

*cow itch vine*

The trumpet vine.

*cow juice*

Milk.

*cowlick*

A peculiar curl in a person's hair, usually just above the forehead. This is supposed to be a mark of good luck.

*cow-mooing*

Fervent gossiping or talking by a group of vociferous women.

*cowpath*

A path through the woods or fields made by the cows. Many a road has been laid out along a cowpath. I often have heard it said that Durham was laid out by a cow. If this is true, then Boston certainly must have been laid by a herd of them.

*Cow Poker*

A game played by children riding in a car, with one child choosing one side of the road, one the other, and counting the number of cows on either side. The one that has the largest number when the journey is over wins. It happens that if one child sees a graveyard on the side of his opponent and calls it out before the other one sees it, that unlucky child loses all his cows and has to start over again.

*like a cow that's lost her cud (or calf)*

Forlorn, lonesome, downhearted.

He looks like his *cow* had died.

An appearance of grief.

Many a good *cow* has a bad calf.

*cow-like*

Bovine, dull, lethargic.

*until the cows come home*

A very long time indeed. "If that dog Bruno ever gets you by the leg, he'll hold on until the cows come home"

*Cows* off yonder have long horns.

*like a cow's tail*, always behind  
Refers to a usual late arrival.

Feed the *cows* that give most milk.

*coyduck*  
Decoy duck.

*crab*  
To complain.

*crab apple*  
Juice from the fruit made a good poultice for sprains. Also it was used in dyeing.

*crabgrass*  
A luxuriant grass that grows in the farmers' fields and will "take the place" if not ploughed out in time. In the old days the farmers used to keep flocks of geese to eat this grass from their cotton fields.

*crabs*  
Body lice of a vicious kind, usually found in houses of prostitution.

*crack*  
To talk in good spirits intimately. "There they sat cracking jokes and drinking co'cola, and all the time the grass was eating up their cotton."  
Excellent, first rate. "I seen Annie Oakley once, and, man alive, she was a crack shot from high low jack and the game."  
A faux pas. "Everything was going okay at the party till he made that crack about the woman with the tin drawers and the preacher with the can opener."  
To have a nervous breakdown. "From the way Floyd McIntosh is acting over television about the race question, he seems about to crack."

*Crack-a-loo*  
A game, sometimes played by pitching pennies, tobacco tags or other tokens at a chosen mark.

*crack a smile*  
To smile unwillingly or to have a half smile on one's face.

*crack-brained*  
Foolish, harebrained, wildly irresponsible.

*crack down*  
Stern judgment, sudden exercise of authority.

***cracked***

Open. "Leave the door cracked a bit."

Loony, crazy.

***cracker***

The string-woven, or hide string, end of a bull whip or a buggy whip.

A story that has a logical but unforeseen ending. O. Henry, the short story writer, was famous for his cracker endings. For example. "The Gift of the Magi," where a loving young couple became the butt of their own irony. The girl had beautiful hair, and she had it cut off and sold to buy a Christmas present for her young husband. He had a watch he prized very much, and he sold it to get a present for his wife. The wife's present was a new fob for the watch. The husband's present was a set of lovely combs for his wife's abundant hair. This all comes out in the final few lines of the story.

The tail-end player in the game of Pop the Whip.

***crackerjack***

A dependable person, a first rate person. "That Smiley boy is a crackerjack."

***cracking***

First rate. "It's my belief that Senator Fulbright is a cracking good man."

***cracklings***

The crisp leavings of hog's fat after lard or oil or grease has been dried out. It had many uses, one being to mix it with the bread batter, helping to make the famous Southern crackling bread.

***crack of day***

The first glimpse of daylight, especially when seen through a low rift in the eastern morning cloud. "He was up at the crack of day."

***crack of doom***

Doomsday as especially prophesied in the Book of Revelation.

***crackpot***

An irresponsible, wildcat scheming person.

***Crack the Whip*** (Same as Pop the Whip)

A very popular game among school children.

Back in the old days at Pleasant Union School, between Lillington and Angier, North Carolina, we used to play it with great delight. Sometimes I would get into the game and get hurt, for I was crippled in my knees and arms for a long time with "white swelling" and couldn't keep up with the other children, but I would manfully try, and sometimes I would get flung to the ground and turn sick at the stomach from pain.

In the game several players join hands and form a long line, usually a strong boy at the head end and then the others stringing out behind him. The leader boy would start running and then turn in a wide circle, pulling all the others after him, and after the line had attained considerable speed he might suddenly reverse his course, pulling along with the others as strongly as before. Then those on the end of the line would be accelerated to such a pace that sometimes they would be turned somersaulting in the air. We had a girl in our school named Lena Overby, and she had the most beautiful dark eyes and peaches and cream complexion I ever saw — a velvety complexion — and she was the most modest thing alive. While other girls in the schoolroom might sit with their dresses careless about their knees and with the boys snickering and whispering and watching them, she always was very demure and kept her dress far down toward her ankles. Well, one day she had the bad luck of being near the end of the whip and, in turning the corner, Piercy, who was last in line, let go her hand on purpose and she was left on the end. Poor Lena was sent flying through the air, her dress over her head. And Piercy let out a cry, “I see ’em, they’re old outing flannel!”

*crack wind*

To fart, same as break wind.

*by cracky or crackies!*

A mild expletive.

*cradle*

An instrument for cutting small grain, that is rye, oats, wheat, with a blade attached to the frame with long spokes or fingers to hold the grain as it fell back under the swipe of the blade.

I remember once trying to break a record in Harnett County by cutting with a cradle. I cut five acres of grain for Mr. Joe Johnson in one day. I started at daybreak and cut all day long until dark, round after round, reaching stroke after stroke with the right hand, the cradle coming up to rest on the thigh, the left hand gathering the grain and laying it aside, and on and on. When night came he paid me \$1.50 and wrote the check out with a stub pencil. The check was good.

Rock an empty *cradle* and soon it will be filled again.

*cradle robber*

An elderly man who marries a girl very much younger than himself. The same applies to an older woman getting her hooks on a young man. “That Ed Jones is a real cradle robber. He took that fifteen-year-old girl to South Carolina and married her.”

as *crafty* as a fox



***cram***

To study hard for an examination.

***cramp***

To hinder, restrain, cripple. "I don't like that fellow, he always cramps my style."

***cranksided***

Twisted, crooked, all awry. "The old wheel stood cranksided under the heavy load."

***cranky***

Abnormal, irritable. "I wouldn't bother him. He's kinda cranky."

Unsteady, unreliable, shaky. "He lives in a cranky old shack down by the river with his one cow staked out in front of the house."

***crap***

Excreta. Also nonsense.

Crop.

***to take a crap***

To defecate.

***crape hanger***

A kill-joy, a pessimistic person, one who looks on the dark side of life.

***crash dive***

To dive headlong down as a kamikaze pilot. When I was writing a picture on Eddie Rickenbacker, he said, "There I was with my wing on fire and it blazing more every moment. The only thing to do was to try and put it out, and so I crash dived toward the earth for ten thousand feet, and finally the flames went out when I was a few hundred feet off the ground and I was saved."

***crate***

A cheap vehicle, a term of disparagement for an automobile. "Hey, move that crate out of the way so a real car can drive in."

***crawfish***

To back out, to renege on a promise.

***crawl***

To beat up, to attack with physical violence. "If that fellow keeps pickin' on me, I'm going to crawl his frame."

***crawling***

Crowded, alive with people or things. "Memorial Hall there in Raleigh was

just crawling with people.”

*crawls*

Shivers, goose pimples. “When John McCormack hits that high note, boy, it gives me the crawls.”

*crawly*

Sensation of having crawling things on one’s body.

*craw sick*

Nauseated, vomit-sick.

*craze*

A fad.

*crazy*

Abnormal, queer. “’Fesser Johnson lives in that crazy house down there on Franklin Street — you can’t miss it.”

He’s as *crazy* about liquor as a steer is for pond water.

*crazy* as a bedbug

*crazy* as a bull bat

*crazy* as a coot

*crazy* as a fly in a drum

*crazy* as a horse in a windstorm

*crazy* as a loon

*crazy* as hell

*crazy* as the devil

*crazy bone*

Funnybone. Sometimes refers to the elbow when one accidentally hits it and a temporary numbness results. “Oh, I hit my crazy bone on that cupboard door.”

*crazy house*

A mental ward, an asylum.

*Crazy is as crazy does.*

A folk proverb common in the Valley as elsewhere.

The truth of this old saying — with a difference — is well illustrated in the story of Dr. J. T. McRae, son of one Allen McRae, a piddling small town politician. Of all the McRae boys, and there were four of them, J.T. was the most determined. His father Allen loved to read about Indians and

so had named him John Tecumseh — the Tecumseh having reference to the great midwest Indian chief and prophet. This J. T., as they called him, worked his way through college at Chapel Hill and finally, after many years of hard going through thick and thin, became a doctor.

While he was studying, so the story goes, he hired himself out as an assistant to one of the new-fangled medical men who had begun appearing in the South about that time but who since then have become thick as thieves in the land, namely, psychiatrists or psychoanalysts — take your pick, as J. T. would now say.

J. T. was a funny-acting fellow, and people said he never would amount to much. In fact most of his neighbors thought he was a little queer in the head and off balance mentally, but later they changed their minds. He had a jerky way of walking and moving his body, and his eyes when he talked would now and then flare up and widen as if they were going to shoot out of his face, and then would narrow down again. This was just a mannerism he had inherited or taken up from his grandpa Turkey Bill Slocumb McRae, and he later got over it. It might have been that the analyst, or whatever he called himself, took him on as an assistant because of this behavior of his. Anyway, after about a year the medical man let J. T. know that he had been studying him all the time and keeping records on him.

“You have, have you?” said J. T., his eyes flaring wider than usual at the great psychology teacher — at least this is the way it was told to me.

“Yes, I have,” said the doctor firmly, “and I’ve decided that you are schizophrenic — in other words crazy.”

And some folks said that perhaps the outspoken doctor would have had J. T. shut up in Dix Hill or sent to Morganton because of his findings but for the fact that out comes J. T. now with a big pile of notes and stuff, telling the doctor he had been studying him the year he’d been there and by his findings the doctor was skitzzy and crazy.

And so the psychology professor was put out of countenance. After much hemming and hawing back and forth, the two of them called a compromise. The professor was now so much struck with J. T. that he offered him a job as a first class assistant and with more pay, saying he believed he had a great future ahead as a psychiatrist. But J. T. had other fish to fry. He said he didn’t want to waste his life in any such foolishness, comforting rich old women and the like. He wanted to practice real medicine. So he finished his degree at Chapel Hill, went on to Pennsylvania, somehow, and at last got his license. He’s back in his hometown now with his sign on his office, and he is already becoming popular up and down the countryside. It is “Dr. J.T.” here and “Dr. J.T.” there, and he is on the go both day and night. As his proud father Allen said, “He’s coining money right sharp.” He’s already bought half interest in a brick mill.

*You're crazy!*

A jocular interjection.

*cream*

To hit viciously, to knock out. "In the ninth round old Ali creamed him."

*cream of the crop*

The best.

*cream through*

To bluff, to always take the easy way out.

*creasy*

Cress.

*creasy sallet*

Upland cress for cooking greens. Early in the spring, often in February, in the fields in the South, Negro women especially can be seen bending down here and there gathering creasy.

*creation*

The beginning of the world as recounted in the Bible.

Everywhere around, all over. "He's the best man in the whole creation."

*That beats all creation.*

Tops everything, an outlandish happening or thing.

*a creep*

A misfit, low-life person. "We'd a-had fun if we hadn't had that creep along."

*creeper*

A hanger around, gigolo. "Whilst Sam was on the chain gang a creeper kept coming to the back door and messing with his wife. When Sam got free, he made for that creeper with the old quietus and shot him full of holes like a sieve. Now Sam's back on the chain gang again."

*creeping about*

Half sick but able to be up. "I'm just creeping about these days, but when spring comes my dander'll be back and I'll be whooping and hollering like always to plant corn."

*creeping Charlie*

A most pestiferous ground plant. It will creep strangling-wise all over your lawn if it's not destroyed. The herbalists say it has fine medicinal value as a stimulant and tonic. Whatever its virtues its knavery outweighs them for me. Also known as gill-o'er-the-ground.

*creeping crud*

A low-life person, dirty, objectionable.

*creeping Jesus*

A whining, pious, hypocritical person.

*creeps*

Shivers. "He gives me the creeps to look at him."

*crepe myrtle*

Perhaps this has finally become the most typical of all the Southern shrubs. In the botany books it is referred to as a shrub, though I have seen single crepe myrtle "shrubs" twenty-five or thirty feet high and with trunks ten to twelve inches in diameter near the ground. From late June and on through September the pink or red (and sometimes white) gushes of blossoms decorate the world. When my wife and I bought an old house near Chapel Hill and remodeled it, the first thing we did was to line the driveway on either side with crepe myrtles.

*crib*

To steal.

*a crib*

A literal translation, usually of Greek or Latin, which is often secretively used by the students in a college or university.

I remember one day in the old classroom there in Chapel Hill when Tom Wolfe was asked to read from the Latin text, and for the first time he read glibly. Dr. Henry looked out, chuckled and complimented him on his reading and then added quite innocently that he'd better put up his translation and read the original. And, of course, then Tom was stumped and stuttered out what little he could of the Latin original. See "pony."

*crick*

A muscular affliction in the neck, the shoulders or back.

Creek.

*cricket*

Fair play.

To have a *cricket* in the house is to have good luck, and it's very bad luck to kill one.

*by cricky!*

A mild expletive.

*cried up*

To praise highly. "He cried up that woman's charms till we were all sick

of the subject.”

If a child *cries* a great deal when it is an infant, it will make a good man or woman.

*crimp*

Cramp. “He crimped my style.”

*crinkly*

Wrinkly, corrugated. “Young Henry Spears keeps his hair all crinkly with the curling irons.”

*crip*

An easy matter, an easy course in school. “Professor Collier Cobb’s course in geology is a plumb crip.”

Also an abbreviation of a cripple.

*cripes!*

An exclamation.

*croak*

To die. “Old Man John Rand, the fiddler that used to wear seven shirts at a time — well, last night he croaked.”

*croak* like a frog

*croaker sack*

A tow bag.

*croak in her throat*

Hoarseness.

*Croatan Indians*

A tribe that had an up and down, sometimes tragic, history. Many of the tribe claim to be descendants from Sir Walter Raleigh’s lost colony of Roanoke Island. At one time they were classed by North Carolina law as Negroes, or “people of color.” They fought this classification and were in time designated Indians. Under the old system many inconveniences resulted. For instance, in public places six restrooms were required, one for white men, one for Indian men, and one for Negro men. Likewise the same sort of separation applied to women. I remember years ago that a lawsuit was brought for the admission of Croatan Indians to the Dunn high school. The Indians won. And in the first year of schooling there an Indian girl was elected by the students — nearly all white — to be senior class president.

*crocodile tears*

Hypocritical tears, simulated grief.

A *crooked* stick will have a crooked shadow.

A *crooked* tree casts a crooked shadow.

as *crooked* as a corkscrew

as *crooked* as a dog's hind legs

as *crooked* as a lawyer

as *crooked* as a pig's tail

as *crooked* as a pretzel

Dishonest. "I cain't do business with him. He's as crooked as a pretzel."

as *crooked* as a sick cow's tail

as *crooked* as a snake

as *crooked* as a stick

as *crooked* as hell

as *crooked* as sin

That which is *crooked* cannot be made straight.

There was a *crooked man*  
 And he went a crooked mile.  
 He found a crooked sixpence  
 Against a crooked stile.  
 He bought a crooked cat  
 Which caught a crooked mouse,  
 And they all lived together  
 In a little crooked house.  
 (A nursery rhyme.)

*crook the elbow*

Take a dram of liquor.

*crop*

To earmark an animal by cutting a notch out of an ear or a piece of the ear off, denoting a particular ownership.

*crope*

Past tense of creep.

*crops in*

The conclusion of a matter, the finish. "When he said that, the crop was in."

*cross*

Ill-tempered, contrary. To oppose, to antagonize.

as *CROSS* as a setting hen

as *CROSS* as cats and dogs

as *CROSS* as scissors

as *CROSS* as two sticks

*Cross* two of your fingers when you are lying and the lie won't count.

Never *CROSS* a bridge till you come to it.

Take up thy *CROSS* and follow me.

The way of the *CROSS* leads home.

No *CROSS*, no crown.

When you *CROSS* your fingers, you don't really mean what you say.

### *Cross Creek*

The early name for Fayetteville because of the manner in which the creeks intersected there. In a flood one creek drove its waters across the other.

### *cross-cut saw*

A two-man saw with upright handles used especially in the old days of timbering.

### *cross-eyed*

Poor judgment, mistaken. "That's a cross-eyed verdict if ever I heard one."

### *cross-furrow*

A furrow ploughed across other furrows at an angle, usually a right angle, to control water.

### *cross-grained*

Perverse, stubborn, sullen.

### *cross knife and fork*

When we were children in eastern North Carolina, it was good manners to cross one's knife and fork on his plate when he had finished eating. In fact, this was a sign that a child or person had enough. How often have I heard my mother say to forgetful me, "Cross your knife and fork, son." Of course, it was very bad manners to drink one's coffee out of his saucer, but everybody did, especially the older persons. The method was to pour hot coffee into the saucer, blow on it to cool it, and then sip it — much the way the Japanese people drink their sake.

### *cross-lift*

Sometimes in the log-rolling days when four men, two to each hand-spike,



were lifting logs along and the load proved too heavy, others would take their hand-spikes, two at a time, and put them under the end of each of the former spikes, and there would be four men to each hand-spike. Thus the lifting power would be much increased.

***cross-mark***

Making a cross-mark on the ground and spitting in it will break bad luck.

***cross my heart and hope to die***

A mild oath, an asseveration much used by children.

*Cross patch* draw the latch,  
Sit by the fire and spin.  
Take a cup and drink it up,  
And call your neighbors in.  
(A teasing rhyme.)

***Cross Tag***

A children's game.

***cross the River Jordan***

To die. "Yeh, last night Aunt Sallie crossed over the River Jordan." (Usually pronounced Jurden.)

***crotchety***

Irritable.

***croton oil***

A most powerful laxative. It was supposed to work so quickly that there was a saying in our neighborhood, "Croton oil goes through you before you can get your britches down." Another saying expressive of speed as to laxative was, "It goes through you like croton oil through a duck."

***crow***

To brag, to boast loudly.

***eat crow***

To have to swallow one's words, reabsorb an insult. After the fiasco of the Bay of Pigs, Herblock had a cartoon showing a waiter bearing a dish of crow to a waiting table of government powers — CIA, Secretary of State, Defense officials, and including the military. The caption read: "There's plenty for everybody."

***crowd***

To jostle, push up against another. "Don't crowd me, big boy, or else. . ."

A *crowd* is not company.

*crow-hop*

A jumping about sort of dance, also said of a horse that jumps about unbroken.

A *crowing* hen is a sign of bad luck.

A whistling woman and a *crowing* hen  
Are critters that'll come to no good end.  
(Wisdom rhyme.)

*crown*

To hit on the head. "You call me a liar and I'll crown you."

*crows*

Big blackbirds about the size of a bantam hen or larger and so well known in North Carolina and throughout the land as to need no introduction or description. It is enough to say that this, my friend the crow — for so I count him now — is one of the most intelligent and enterprising creatures on earth, and he has to be in order to survive and thrive as he seems to be doing in this technological automobile-speeding age. His example of industry and forethought — his up early and out late working for his living — is something that could put to shame all hippies and gays and welfare deadbeats with their government sponsors now infesting the land, if they could but take it to heart. The example of the crow should be preached to them until they had to take notice. But nothing will be done, of course, for neither they nor Uncle Sam knows the difference between a crow and a crowbar and doesn't want to know.

Nearly every time I see a crow I think of Izzy Izzard. His name actually was Israel, Israel Izzard. The Izzards lived between Elizabethtown and Wilmington close by the river, and Norman Izzard, the father, was mainly a corn farmer. Every spring he was mightily tormented by the crows pulling up his young sprouting corn. Like the other farmers he put up scarecrows in the field, and as always the crows got onto the sham and came in the early daybreak to go after the sprouting corn as hard as ever. Izzy the son was about fifteen the year Norman was laying out plans for his biggest corn crop. During the winter he and the hands had got in several more acres of newground and he was counting on his biggest harvest.

"We ought to make the best crop we've ever made," he said, "if the dang crows will but let us alone."

Now Izzy had already shown a sharpness for making a trade here and there and he had quite a bit of small change saved up in a tin can in his bureau drawer. For instance, when Norman would take the children, say, on an excursion to Wilmington and give each of them two dollars to spend, Izzy would bring most of his back to go into the tin can. He would look a lot

and buy little. And another thing that showed his saving and already stingy nature was the way he got his pencils at school. He'd find a student who had a new lead pencil and would say to him, "I'll let you break that there pencil over my head if you'll let me have the piece that falls." And then often crack, crack would go the pencil until it was broken in two. But Izzy never flinched, and he always had a piece of pencil to write with that didn't cost him a penny. So he up and says to his father, "About the crows. What would you give me, Pa, for each dead crow?"

"Plenty," said his daddy, "but you can't shoot a crow. They're too smart. You know that, for we've been down there in the field many a time before light waiting for 'em and they didn't come. They knew we were there. And when you try to creep up on 'em, the watchman crow they always have sitting off in a high tree gives the alarm and off they go — caw, caw. No, they ain't no getting by a crow."

"Looks like a crow hadn't ort to be smarter than human folks," said Izzy.

"Yeh, but they are," said his daddy, "smarter about not letting you kill 'em."

"But how much would you give if somebody could kill 'em, Pa?" asked Izzy.

"I'd give a whole silver quarter apiece for 'em," he said, "and I mean it."

"Shake hands on it, Pa," said Izzy.

"Sure thing," said his pa. And they did.

Sometime before this Izzy had heard an old wild-turkey hunter say that the way to kill turkeys was to bait them a long while beforehand and then lie hid in the bushes or behind a stump ahead of time till they came down as usual and then let fly at 'em and get your meat. Izzy had noticed a large hollow blackgum log lying at the edge of the cornfield with its open end pointing out to the field. The tree had been cut down many years before for a bee-tree. So he did some thinking and planning. He got a shovel and dug a long v-shaped trench leading from the log out into the field, and into this trench he scattered a peck of shelled corn. At first nothing happened. When he went down during the first day after, the corn was untouched, and then a day or two later he saw it was being eaten and crow tracks were all around in the soft dirt. He replenished the grain with another peck. The next time he went down, a great flock of crows flew up out of the ditch before he got within two hundreds yards of the place. He put in still more corn, and for two weeks or so he continued to do so. Then one morning long before day he felt the time had come. He got up about three o'clock in the morning to put his plan into execution. His father heard him stirring about and asked him what he was up to.

"I'm going after them crows," Izzy said. "And a silver quarter for

each dead one — right?"

"Right," said his daddy, "and it ain't gonna cost me a red cent, baiting or no baiting."

"They've been eating that shelled corn right hearty lately," said Izzy, "and I expect there's mergins of 'em. I'll come back later and get the wagon to haul 'em in — after you hear my muzzle-loader go off down there in the field."

"You and *my* muzzle-loader," said his daddy, "and I'll bet you five dollars to a nickel too you don't kill crow one."

"I'll take the bet," said Izzy. "Shake?" And they did.

"You'll never get close enough to 'em," said his pa. "You can hide in the bushes but they'll see you."

"Wanter make another bet I can hide where they don't see me?" said Izzy.

"Go on with your bets, boy, and be careful not to load that gun too heavy, it'll kick your teeth out."

"I reckon I've shot it plenty times," said Izzy. He went out into the kitchen and there by lamplight loaded it. And a big extra load of powder and handful of number 4 shot he put into each barrel and rammed them home with double wadding. Yes, sir, the crows better watch out this time. And he hurried off across the fields in the dark. Reaching the hollow log, he backed inside it, and propped his muzzle-loader all capped and cocked, with the barrels pointing straight down the trench where the supply of corn shone white in the starlight and waiting for the crows. He put a scattering of twigs and little brush stuff in front of his face, and there he lay all camouflaged and snug peering out, waiting.

Just as daybreak was beginning to show, the crows started arriving. And crows, crows! Never had Izzy seen so many. And they kept coming and lighting down, cawing away, flapping their wings, dipping their heads down and up, down and up, guzzling away at the corn. Before long the v-shaped trench, some hundred or more feet long, was jammed full of them. Now was the time! Izzy sighted carefully down along the seam between the barrels of the old muzzle-loader, aiming full along the trench. Then he pulled both triggers.

Up at the house Mr. and Mrs. Izzard were having breakfast when the sound of the gun was heard.

"Well, Izzy finally has shot at something down there in the fields," Norman said.

"Seemed like it sounded mighty loud, don't you think so, Norman?"

"Well, it did for a fact," he said, as he reached for another flapjack. "He'll be on in a minute and I'll collect that bet out of him from his tin box. I bet him five dollars he wouldn't kill crow one."

"I hope nothing's happened to him," his wife said.

"Nothing can happen to Izzy," Norman said and laughed. "You know what he said, he said he'd come get the two-horse wagon to haul up the dead crows. Hah, hah!"

Time passed, Norman milked the cows, came in and helped his wife clean up things. But Izzy hadn't shown up.

"Maybe you'd better go down there and see if anything's happened," Mrs. Izzard said.

He set out across the field, and when he came to the edge of the newground piece where Izzy had baited the birds, he saw a sight the like of which he'd never seen before. Dead crows were lying in piles on top of one another, the long ditch full of them, and a few crippled ones were flopping about, trying to fly or walk. Norman looked anxiously around for Izzy. "Izzy, Izzy, where are you?" he called. But no Izzy. He stood there thinking, and then he put two and two together and figured the shot that killed the crows had come from the edge of the woods there. He walked over and saw the half-concealed end of the hollow log, and he saw something else. He saw Izzy's limp arm lying there in the opening of the log across the barrel of the old muzzle-loader. In no time he had dragged the boy out of there and into the sunlight.

Izzy seemed dead to the world, and blood was seeping out of both his ears. "Izzy, Izzy," his daddy called, and rolled him back and forth. Finally Izzy opened his eyes and asked what had happened. He didn't hear what his daddy said, for he was deaf as a post. The concussion of the gun inside the log had really clobbered him. Out in the air it would only have given him a hard kick but inside the log and with the extra heavy loads of powder and shot, the shock waves had almost killed him. His daddy spoke to him again, but Izzy couldn't hear a word. And for several days he was deaf as could be.

But what did Izzy care, for he had really massacred the crows. Just as he had said, they had to get the two-horse wagon to haul them in, and they put them in a great heap in front of the house to show the astounded neighbors. By count there were 879 crows, including the few crippled ones he and his daddy killed with a stick. And true to his word Norman paid up the full amount at a quarter a crow which with the five dollar bet came to \$224.75. Izzy took it all over to the bank in town and opened a savings account. By this time he could hear again.

"Ah, that Izzy," the neighbors said, "ain't he something! He'll be a millionaire someday and even maybe governor of the state."

"Or who knows," said another, "maybe president. I wouldn't put nothing past him."

But Izzy never became the man they prophesied. Perhaps the concussion inside the log had addled his brains, I don't know. But for one reason or another he never amounted to much. Until he died, a poor farmer, the big

day in his life was the day he murdered a mass of crows. For that the Valley remembers him.

*crows* like a rooster

Usually said of someone who brags a lot.

*Crows* of a feather will flock together.

*crow's feet*

Wrinkles to the sides of one's eyes. Such wrinkles around the eyes of elderly men used to mean that they were good-natured, genial. Also a well-known damp-meadow grass.

*Crow's Nest*

A child's finger rhyming game. One child crosses his fingers and tells another child to feed the crow, saying:

“Stick your finger in the crow's nest.  
The crow is not at home.  
The crow is at the back door  
Picking at a bone.”

And then as the child's finger is inserted, the one with the crossed fingers gouges with his thumbnail, saying: “The crow's at home!”

*a crow to pick*

To discuss an embarrassing matter with someone, or to take up a subject that has been left unfinished, to criticize. “Come here, young man, I've got a crow to pick with you,” said my Aunt Laura.

*crud*

A loathsome fellow or thing.

*cruddy*

Dirty, lowdown.

*crumb*

A dirty, low-life fellow. “I worked in Child's Restaurant for a year and I thought I'd met every crumb in the world until I met up with you.”

*crummy*

Cheap, poor quality, sorry, dirty.

*crupper*

Buttocks.

*crush*

A maudlin, sentimental attachment. “My wife's got a crush on that fellow, and every night she just sits palpitating until he comes on the TV.”

A large crowded gathering. "There was such a crush at Governor Moore's reception that you could hardly breathe."

*upper crust*

The elite, high society, the hoity-toity.

*crutch*

One to depend on. "That old selfish woman just kept her daughter there as a crutch, and all the boys passed on by. Now she's an old maid, drying up in that there great big house."

Great *cry* and little wool, as the devil said when he sheared his hogs.

*cry-baby*

An irritable child or whiny, complaining person.

A person who weeps easily. My cousin, Cara Little of Lillington, was one of the most emotional and easily religiously stirred persons I've ever met — a real cry baby. Nearly every time we saw each other, she'd take hold of my hand and cling to it and look deeply into my eyes and shake her head in sorrow over my sinful and lost condition. And then her lips would begin to tremble and the tears would begin to roll, and always she would say, "Paul, I'm praying for you, I'm praying for you all the time."

*Cry baby, cry*

Stick your finger in your eye  
And make the water fly.

(A teasing rhyme.)

A fourth line — "Tell your mama it wasn't I" —  
is sometimes added.

It's no use *crying* over spilled milk.

*crying shame*

A very great shame indeed.

"It's a crying shame," said my old philosopher friend, Mr. Mac, "how the preachers tried to get Tim Messer to burn up his fiddle after he got converted. He didn't do it, and I'm sure glad."

"And I hear," I said, "that he fell from grace later and went back to playing and sinning again."

"So he did, and I'm glad of that too," he said.

"And so am I," I said heartily enough.

"Yes sir," Mr. Mac continued, "music is a powerful thing. Take the case of Christopher Mitchell. He and I grew up as boys together. You didn't know Chris, did you?"

"No sir," I smiled, "I guess he was a bit before my time."

“That’s right, he was. Well, Chris was a wonder on the fiddle and, like Tim Messer, he played from here to yonder at dances and shindigs. He won a lot of first prizes at fiddlers’ conventions too. Well, like Tim, he got converted at a revival and the preacher ordered him to burn his devil’s instrument. A number of the sympathizing neighbors, including a deacon or two, gathered at Chris’ house to console him the night of the burning. It was a mighty cold night and a big log fire was going in the fireplace, and this would be the right place to burn the fiddle, all easy and quick-like.

“Chris brought out his fiddle to consign it to the flames. I’ve seen it — a purty thing to look at. First they had a little prayer. Chris wanted it that way. Old Reuben Welken, the head deacon, led the praying, and he called on the Heavenly Father to bless Chris for this good deed, and so on. And Sister Martha Wiggins amened two or three times in her high squeaky voice. She had once in her younger days been a quick stepper in the square dance but long ago had found salvation and had quit it.

“Then Chris, with the tears pouring from his eyes, caressed his fiddle like a baby before he was to consign it to the flames. He swept his fingers across the strings careless like, and a little moan came out of his mouth.

“‘That’s the way “Money Musk” used to start out,’ he said, not thinking, so deep in sadness he was.

“‘I thought “Leather Britches” started like that,’ said old Reuben.

“‘No,’ said Chris, ‘you’re thinking of “John Paul Jones.”’

“‘Reuben’s right,’ said old Martha. ‘It’s “Money Musk” and what a tune! I remember once when I was about seventeen at a party at —’ She clamped her mouth suddenly shut. ‘No, no, ’twon’t do,’ she said.

“Then Chris made a mistake — or didn’t, whichever, you choose — he said that ‘Money Musk’ went this way and ‘Leather Britches’ this other way. And lifting the fiddle to his chin he illustrated with a few pulls of the bow. Well, when those heart-touching and fast-tingling tunes poured forth in the room, old Reuben was deeply touched, and so were the others. Then Reuben, who was a fool about music of all sorts, up and said he didn’t see why, seeing as how this was the last time they would ever be able to hear Chris play, they couldn’t listen to a few final pieces before they put the ‘instrument into the far.’

“Old Martha said she thought it would be all right and the Heavenly Father would understand, ‘bless His holy name.’

“So Chris started fiddling, and in no time at all he had forgot his tears, and others were forgetting and as they forgot they remembered the old days.

“On and on Chris played, one old favorite piece after the other — ‘Money Musk,’ ‘Leather Britches,’ ‘John Paul Jones,’ and ‘Turkey in the Straw.’ By the time he got to ‘John Paul’ a number of the listeners were patting their feet in rhythm to the music. Chris’ old close-mouthed and tight-fisted father Hosea began to move his bony shoulders back and forth to



the beat of the music, and the patting of the feet increased. And when Chris broke out with 'Get along home, Cindy,' a few voices sang a bit with exclamations of 'Say on,' 'Tell of the good news,' 'Let the fiddle talk,' and the like. Next it was 'Sally Goodin,' and this was too much to sit still and hear. One just had to move, and old Martha Wiggins moved. She did more than that, she cut a step or two. This prompted ancient Reuben Welken to step out beside her and give a few matching turns, clapping his hands the while. Hand-clappings now broke out all over the place. Whether Chris intended it or not, he had saved the best tune for the last. It was now 'Old Joe Clark' he fiddled.

"This was too much for restraint. In no time at all everybody was dancing, and Chris was walking up and down calling out the figures as he had so often in the days gone by.

"Well, to make a long story short, under the spell of his music, I guess you might say, the work of the preachers in converting Chris was wiped out. Whereas he had been changed from nature to grace before, he changed back from grace to nature. After old Martha had given out and had to be helped gasping back to her seat, the music and dancing stopped, and quiet came over the scene, an embarrassed quiet at that. Then it was Chris kissed his fiddle, held it up proudly and announced loudly that he wasn't going to burn it. And he didn't. Some of the people agreed with him. Others shook their heads and went away no doubt wondering what had come over them to make them behave so.

"Ah, music!" said Mr. Mac.

See "devil's music box."

### *crying towel*

Belly-aching, excessive apologizing. The crying towel is used a great deal by football coaches at the beginning of their season. "Well, I was talking to Coach Howard of Clemson the other day, and as usual he brought out the crying towel about the condition of his men. And so you'd better watch him next Saturday when he shows up there with his gang of roughnecks in Kenan Stadium."

### *cry Lord and follow devil*

To be hypocritical.

### *cry on one's shoulder*

Seek comfort, a maudlin begging for sympathy.

### *cub*

A young inexperienced fellow.

### *cubby hole*

A hole usually cut in the ceiling through which one could climb into the attic.

*cucklebur*

Cocklebur.

*cuckoo*

Drunk, crazy, loony.

*cuckoo's nest*

A sell, a foolish mess, a silly stew.

One flew east and one flew west,  
One flew over the *cuckoo's nest*.  
(Nonsense rhyme.)

*cud*

The dictionary defines cud as "that portion of food which is brought up into the mouth by ruminating animals from their first stomach to be chewed a second time." In our neighborhood a person with the melancholies or mulligrubs or dumps would often be spoken of as having lost his or her cud.

We children were raised to believe that the cud was a certain kind of rubbery-like object which a cow, say, kept in her stomach all the time, and now and then when she wanted to lie about and take a rest, she would bring up her cud and chew on it awhile and "ruminate." I remember once our cow Liza got very disconsolate and took no interest in anything, and old Abel Short, the cow doctor, was sent for. He came and rendered a verdict, as he cocked one red-rimmed eye at the western sky, that she'd lost her cud. "Mr. Billy," he said to my father, "there ain't nothing for it but to make her another cud and get her to take it. If she don't get a cud to work on, she's a dead duck, take it from me. She'll grieve herself to death."

"But what you going to make a cud out of?" my daddy asked.

And the cow doctor said, "Just wait and see." He'd fix up one. He did come forth with some kind of little hairy object with strings tied around it about the size of a small walnut. And then it was something to see him try to insert this cud in Liza's mouth. The long and short of it was that Liza got so mad that she chased the cow doctor out of the lot, and from then on she was much improved. The next day in fact she was chewing on her own cud placidly enough.

"So who can say my cow-doctoring don't do no good?" Old Abel asked with a grin. "She's well, ain't she?"

*to lose one's cud*

To be dejected, downcast, in the grip of the melancholies.

*cuff*

An iron shackle.

To strike in and about the head, neck and face.

*off the cuff*

Off the record, something said not to be reported by those who hear it. Also snap judgment.

*cuke*

Cucumber.

*Culloden*

The site of a bloody meeting of the Scotch and British forces on April 16, 1746, which resulted in the terrible defeat of the Scots. The English were led by the Duke of Cumberland, afterwards known as the "bloody duke," and the Scots by Prince Charlie of the house of Stuart, pretender to Scotland's throne. Because of this defeat, hundreds of Scottish people left their homeland and settled in America, the majority of them in North Carolina. And on down through many decades the memories and the legends from that battle were recounted in the Valley. Poems and songs were made about it. One of the loveliest songs I ever heard — and my old friend used to sing it and accompany himself with soft banjo strummings — was "The Flowers of the Forest." Mr. Mac said it actually was written as a lament about the battle of Flodden, but he, like many others, made it apply equally to Culloden. Sir Walter Scott loved this song and said it was so imitative of ancient minstrelsy that it was hard for him to believe it was written in his own time. It begins with —

"I've heard the lilting at our yowe-milking,  
Lasses a-lilting before the dawn o' day;  
But now they are moaning on ilka green loaning,  
The Flowers o' the Forest are a' wede away."

Then the song goes on to tell the story of the battle and how the English "by guile won the day," concluding with—

"We hear nae mair lilting at our yowe-milking,  
Women and bairns are heartless and wae;  
Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning;  
The Flowers o' the Forest are a' wede away."

I've often wondered why the people of Cumberland named their county after the "bloody duke." See "Battle of Culloden."

*Cumberland Academy*

One of the many academies established in the Valley during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

This academy was at the old and long-ago perished town of Summerville in Harnett County near the present town of Lillington. In fact, it was the first county seat of Harnett. Later the county government was moved to

Lillington. The Academy was founded in 1852, some thirty-five years before the nearby Buie's Creek Academy, which later became Campbell College and, more recently, Campbell University.

The Cumberland Academy's rates were low, from four to eight dollars the quarter for tuition and one dollar and a half a month for room rent and servant help. My father attended it a while when he was a boy and spoke now and then of the head of the school, a Reverend Simeon Colton, D.D. This educator was evidently a forward-looking man. In reading old records in Fayetteville I found that while he was principal of Donaldson Academy in Fayetteville he was had up for what his Presbyterian accusers called heresy. A member of the church, a widower, had expressed his intent to marry the sister of his deceased wife. The church was outraged, and he was accused of possible incest. The Scriptures forbade such a marriage, they said. Dr. Colton took the man's part and thereby lost his job. He moved to Summerville and took over the school there. Later he returned to his former home in Connecticut. It would be interesting to know what he, a Yankee, thought of the South.

*cundum*

Condom.

*cunning*

Cute, adorable. "He's the cunningest baby I ever laid eyes on."

as *cunning* as a cat

as *cunning* as a crow

as *cunning* as a fox

*to cunny-fuggle*

To play with a woman's private parts.

*cunt*

The female pudendum.

*cunt colic*

A female in the throes of sexual hunger — maris appetens.

*cup*

To treat by cupping. The old doctor used to cup my father for the backache. He would first lance the back, then take a glass tumbler, insert a burning piece of paper in it, fasten it to my father's naked back, and as the oxygen was burnt out, a tremendous vacuum was created which would suck the flesh up into the cup an inch or more, drawing the blood out plentifully. I remember reading that when George Washington was near death's door, he pleaded with the doctor to cup him, and the doctor did until the father

of his country was so weak he could hardly whisper. Then the end came.

*not my cup of tea*

Not my style, not my concern.

*in one's cups*

To be drunk.

*cups and saucers*

A child's playtime use of acorns. When we were tiny children we used to gather acorns, take the little hulls and drink water from them and pretend all sorts of eating doings.

*cur-dog*

A cur.

*cure-all*

Drink whey and lie still.

What cannot be *cured* must be endured.

*cure for dropsy*

One of Dr. Marshall's famous folk cures for dropsy was to take one tablespoon of steel dust, two tablespoons of powdered Virginia snake root, two tablespoons of ginger root, two of dogwood root bark, two of black china tree bark, two of low myrtle root bark, and mix it all in honey or molasses until liquid-soft. A dose was one half a teaspoon three times a day in a glass of water. Then the dose was gradually increased to one teaspoonful three times per day. The patient was ordered to avoid damp air and wet feet. Many a person said he owed his life to this old remedy.

*cure for fits*

Like the cure for corns or warts or styes, the cures for fits were varied and numerous. I remember one old man in our neighborhood who claimed he had a certain cure for fits. He would murmur some hocus-pocus words over the afflicted one and then take the green bough of a pine tree, row out into the pond and stick it up in the shallow water and, as it aged and turned brown, the victim would gradually be free of his fits. So he said and so he practiced, and he picked up a little fee now and then.

*curiosity*

A peculiar or outstanding thing or person, something striking. "The new fellow at the crossroads is sure a curiosity with his medicine show."

*Curiosity* killed the cat.

*curl*

The twisted stem of a watermelon. We were taught on our farm that when

the curl grew brown, then the watermelon was ready for pulling. Also, we used to always thump the watermelons, and by the muffled sound of the thump one could tell whether it was ripe.

To kill, especially by shooting. "If that sonofabitch fools with me, I'll curl his fingers."

*makes one's hair curl*

A horrifying piece of news or experience.

*curl up*

To become silent, fold up.

*curly-cue*

A cowlick, also the flourish of a signature.

*Curly locks*, curly locks,  
Wilt thou be mine?  
Thou shalt not wash dishes  
Nor yet feed the swine,  
But sit on a cushion  
And sew a fine seam  
And feed upon strawberries,  
Sugar and cream.  
(Nursery rhyme.)

"Less *currying* and more corn, please," said the horse to its owner.

*the curse*

A woman's monthly period.

*curses* like a sailor

*curses* like chickens come home to roost

*curtains*

Death. "After four years lying on death's row, they finally put old man Adams in that electric chair, and it was curtains for him."

*a curve*

A surprise, a deceit. "I had my deal all set, then that SOB threw me a curve and I was out in the cold."

*dead man's curve*

Any dangerous sharp curve on a road, also refers to a woman's bosomy curves.

*cush*

A sort of gruel made of cornmeal, mixed with milk and flavoring. Mother

used to add bread crumbs. We children loved it. Where the name came from I've never been able to find out.

*cushions*

Luxury, comfort. "That man's in cushions since he married all that money."

*cuss*

Curse.

*cussedness*

Perverseness, obstinacy, sullenness.

*custard apple*

Same as pawpaw.

*cut*

To castrate. "I want you to help me tomorrow — I've got to cut my hogs."

Don't *cut* off your nose to spite your face.

*a cut above*

To be superior somewhat, to be a degree better than another.

*cut a caper*

To blow up in anger, to become hysterically active.

*cut a dido*

To behave hysterically. According to Greek legend, Dido was the founder and queen of Carthage, and when Aeneas, after the fall of Troy, stopped at Carthage Dido fell in love with him. On his departure she, broken-hearted, mounted a funeral pyre and died in the flames. Henry Purcell, the gifted 17th century English composer, wrote an opera about Dido and Aeneas. Nahum Tate furnished the book.

*cut a fine figure*

To play the dandy, to act pridefully, to show one's fine feathers.

*cut and dried*

Arranged beforehand, obvious, all set.

*cut a rust*

To misbehave, to be brash and loud, to create a ruckus.

*cut a shine*

To act in such a way as to show off in an obnoxious manner.

*cut a splash*

To show off in a big way.

*cut corners*

To economize, to act more swiftly, efficiently, etc.

*cut dead*

To deliberately ignore a person, to pass on by without speaking.

*cut down*

To outspell. At our Pleasant Union country school, which I attended as a child, the custom was to have a spelling match the last thing on Friday afternoon. I always looked forward eagerly to this. The teacher would select two of the best spellers, boy and girl, to choose students to line up on opposite sides. I often was selected, and the yellow-haired girl I was crazy about was chosen. Then the spelling would begin, the teacher walking up and down between the opposing lines giving out the words from *Harrington's Speller*, the successor to the old blue-back speller. The student was given two trials at the word, and if he failed, the next one was given a chance. If he/she was successful, then he had "cut down" the preceding student. More often than not the final two left opposing each other were the yellow-haired girl and myself. In this contest, as I later observed it in life, when ambition is involved, rarely is any mercy shown.

as *cute* as a kitten

as *cute* as the devil

*cut fine*

To reduce to a minimum, to leave only a tiny margin.

*cut for heart*

To go for the prize, to try to outdo another.

George Alston who did a lot of manual work with me used to tell me of his prideful axe-cutting days. He could souse his axe up to the eye in a green pine — and when he would tangle up with some other champion they would often cut for heart. George said, "I never was out-cut by any man, Mr. Green, and though I'm 80 years old right now, I bet I could out-cut you for heart in any of these big trees standing around here." "Yes, George, yes."

*cut for wind*

George used to tell me about this contest also. Two cutters on opposite sides of a big tree would try to match blow for blow, the one moving faster and faster and the other trying to keep up until finally one would call out, "I got to blow." His adversary would be the winner. George told me about tangling with a great brute of a fellow once and how they cut into a tree four feet in diameter. "Well, I'm here to tell you, Mr. Green, I ruint him, I plumb ruint him. From that day on he was a bellowsed man. I cut for wind



and winded him."

***cut his comb***

To take one down a peg or two, to deflate a person's ego. In the play, "The Lost Colony," there's a line about Sir Walter Raleigh which is spoken by the comedian, Old Tom — "Well, watch your crowing, Sir Walter, or they'll cut your comb some day like His Worship the bishop."

***cutie-pie***

A term of endearment.

***cut it out***

Stop, quit, cease from doing. "Sawing on that old fiddle you're going to drive me crazy, boy. Cut it out!"

***cut it short***

To hurry to an end. Senator Robert Reynolds speaking in the "Lost Colony" amphitheatre on Roanoke Island once spoke for an interminable time. He was supposed to talk for only seven or eight minutes. Now and then he would say, "Well, folks, one more point and I'll cut it short." At this, applause broke out.

***cut loose***

To untie, to unhitch, to let go quickly.

***cut no ice***

Made no difference, not important.

***cut one's coat according to the cloth***

To act in line with circumstances, to live within one's means.

***cut one's teeth on***

A hard subject that one deals with, a difficult undertaking that one matches his strength with in an experimental way.

***cut out***

To stop, to quiet down. "Cut out that racket — hear me!"

To supersede, to be the successful rival. "She used to love John best, but then when Neil come along he cut John out and got her."

Extinguish. "Cut out the lights before you go to bed." Same as put out.

***to be cut out***

Meant to be, intended. "From the first he was cut out to be a preacher."

***cut the dust***

To go fast.

*cut the gravel*

To start an automobile swiftly.

*cut the mustard*

To have high spirits, plenty of sex power though old. "Old Reuben Bland was 90 years old and had had thirty-four children but, boy, he could still cut the mustard!"

*cut up*

To misbehave.

*a cut-up*

A rowdy or broiling person.

*cyard*

Card. An old pronunciation, like gyarden (garden).

*cymling*

A round squash and also a watch. I've heard one man at church ask another, "What time is it by your cymling, Joe?"

# D

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## *dab*

To strike or pat softly, also to peck at gently.

A tiny bit, a touch of, a small portion. "You've got a dab of smut on your nose."

## *dab (dibs) on*

Claim on. "I've got dabs on that last apple."

## *dad*

An elderly man, usually used affectionately.

## *dat drat (drot, dum, gast) it!*

A mild interjection.

## *daddy*

A lover.

To beget. "Old Broadhuss daddied more young'uns in the Cape Fear Valley than any man that ever lived."

## *sugar daddy*

Usually an elderly male lover who gives freely of his substance and what love he can eke out to his young doxy.

## *daffodil*

Perhaps the most popular of all flowers. In early spring they can be seen in golden plenty in nearly every flower garden in the Valley and in clumps or rows in front of or near every home, no matter how humble. Also like the onion, its bulb when split and applied to an arthritic or aching joint is supposed to bring relief. Of all William Wordsworth's poems, his "Daffodils" is perhaps the most often quoted. I used to get great comfort from saying it aloud to the empty fields as I ploughed round and round.

“I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o’er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of golden daffodils,  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.”

And in the last stanza of this short poem, Wordsworth states his poetic philosophy of “impassioned recollection,” states it in unmatched words that thrilled me through--though I was not lying on a couch but was struggling with a sweat-heavy plough.

“For oft when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude,  
And then my heart with rapture fills  
And dances with the daffodils.”

*daffy-down-dilly* (a daffodil)

Daffy-down-dilly has now come to town  
In a yellow petticoat and a green gown.

See “wake-robin.”

*by dag!*

A mild expletive.

*daggone it!*

A mild expletive.

*I be daggone!* (or *doggone*)

Also an expletive.

*daid*

Dead.

*dairy*

A small utility house over a spring in which butter, milk and other perishables were kept. Sometimes called a dish house. We didn’t have a spring on our farm but we lowered milk, butter and other items down in the well for cooling.

*turn toes to the daisies*

To die, to be buried.

*daisy*

One of our most popular wild flowers, its blossoms adding a cheerful, almost

gay, feeling to the landscape in early summer. It grows plentifully in meadows, pastures, and along the roadsides and is widely used in flower beds and lawn borders. The Valley girls, as elsewhere, used to tell love fortunes by reciting a divination rhyme as they plucked the petals away one by one--

“One I love, two I love,  
Three I love, I say.  
Four I love with all my heart,  
Five I cast away.  
Six he loves, seven she loves,  
Eight they both love.  
Nine they come and ten they tarry,  
Eleven they court and twelve they marry.”

*daisy cutter*

A sharply hit baseball that goes close to the ground, same as grass cutter.

*daisy petals*

A children's game of reciting "He/She loves me, he/she loves me not," as each white petal of the daisy is pulled out.

*ups-a-daisy*

Often said in jollity when tossing a baby or small child up into the air.

*damage*

Expense, cost, price. "Now that we've finished the job, what's the damage?"

*damageous*

Damaging.

*damfino*

Damn if I know!

*damn*

Expletive, used in multitudinous ways, as damn your eyes, damn it to hell, damn fool, damn scoundrel, damn, double damn, etc.

*don't give a tinker's damn*

Doesn't care, not interested.

*not worth a damn*

Worthless.

*be-damned*

Usually used for intensification. "That J. Edgar Hoover is as tough as be-damned."

*dampen one's fingers*

To aid in better working, to help in a stronger resolve, much the same as to spit on one's hands.

We used to dampen our fingers now and then with a swift lick of the tongue in cotton picking. This helped us the better to pull the sun-dried locks of cotton from the open bolls.

*close one's damper down*

Stop one's wild doings, said of a person who is over-amorous.

*dance*

To jump about in pain. "I burnt my hand on the stove, and man, did it make me dance!"

Them that *dance* must pay for the fiddling.

*dance on air*

To be hanged.

*dancer*

A little top. In the old days we children made our tops which we called dancers from cutting thread spools half in two. Then, setting a little sharpened axle and trimming the spool to a point, we made the upper point of the little axle somewhat flat. And then grasping it between our thumb and forefinger, we made it spin.

*dancing*

In the old days this was considered a sin and many a church member was turned out of the congregation for indulging in it. Most often when he or she promised to quit it, the erring member was reinstated.

*dandelion*

The familiar early spring weed. It grows in woodlands, meadows, fields, along roadsides, anywhere and everywhere. We sometimes gathered it for salads and early greens. The juice or tea was supposed to be good for children's kidneys. Also the ground-up dried roots were sometimes used as a substitute for coffee.

*dander*

Choler, anger, high spirits, pep. "You get to fooling with old man Martin Matthews' watermelon patch and you'll get his dander up."

*dandle*

To bounce up and down as with a baby on the knee.

*dandruff (dander)*

"The way Congress is behaving just gets my dandruff up."

*dandy*

In good shape, usually used with the word "fine." "It's spring and I feel fine and dandy."

*dang! (dang it!)*

An exclamation.

*in danger*

To be near death. "Have you heard about Miss Millie Upchurch — she's been in danger since day before yesterday."

'Tis *dangerous* marrying a widow, because she hath cast her rider.

*dangle around*

To court.

*from Dan to Beersheba*

Much, completely, inclusively. From the references in the Old Testament such as the Lord's curse spoken of in the Second Book of Samuel 24:15, "And there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men." The phrase "from Dan to Beersheba" occurs a number of times in the Bible and always in this incorporative sense.

*dap*

To dip. "She dapped her handkerchief in the branch and washed her face right in front of him."

*Dare Base*

This is a game of chase and is much the same as prison base. The young people choose two leaders, and then these two leaders alternately choose their followers. Each group selects a base some fifty yards from that of his opponent, and then each one dares the other. Any member of either side who is tapped by anyone belonging to the other side must stand in prison. This prison is a ring marked on the ground a few yards behind the opponent's base. The prisoner may be won back if one of his own side runs to him and taps him before the opposition taps him. The game ends when all the members of one side have been caught or the young people are tired and wish to turn to something else.

*daresent (dassent)*

Dare not.

*dare you*

A challenge, a dare, often in the sense of a race or a competition. "I'll dare you to the millpond first." And then the footrace follows. "I dare you, I double dare you, I nigger dare you."

*dark* as a cellar

*dark* as a dungeon

*dark* as a pocket

*dark* as midnight

*dark* as night

*dark* as pitch

*dark* as the grave

*dark* as the inside of a grave (tomb)

*darky*

An old-time word for Negro. "The state has promised me five hundred darkies to work on the railroad, and I know some of them will have to work wearing the ball and chain. But what can you do? When you need help, you need it — and besides, it's the cheapest you can get," so said Boss Little.

*an old man's darling*

A young girl, usually mistress, kept or got in marriage by an older man like "the girl in the gilded cage."

*"Darling Nelly Gray"*

B.R. Hanby's beautiful lament for a lost one. "Oh, my darling Nelly Gray, they have taken you away, and I'll never see my darling any more." Like Stephen Foster's "Old Black Joe" and "Old Uncle Ned," it makes the throat tighten and the heart ache. It used to be popular with our male quartet and with young people generally on hayrides and at picnics.

*darn!*

An expletive.

*a darning gourd*

A small smooth round gourd over which an article which is to be darned is stretched. I remember when I was a child seeing many old women around carrying little darning gourds in their apron pockets. When they'd sit down to talk, out would come the gourd and the darning needle would get busy.

*dash*

Splurge, show off. "Rass Easom certainly cuts a dash since he got himself that new car."

*dash it all!*

An interjection.



*date back*

To remember.

*daubing (dobbing)*

Mud or mortar used to fill in between logs in a cabin or tobacco barn wall, also in a "stick and dirt" chimney.

*dauncy*

Mentally unstable, ailing, squeamish, also bad-tempered.

*put on the dawg*

To show off.

*day*

Lucky time. "Yessir, this is my day—I've already got my bag limit."

The dawn. "I get up about day every morning, winter or summer."

Come *day*, go *day*,  
God send Sunday.  
(Divination rhyme.)

The *day* has eyes, the night has ears.

*day-down (day-dark)*

Sunset, the gloom of evening. "That little be-shame bush closes up at day-down."

*a day late and a dollar short*

To be lazy, laggard, remiss.

*call it a day*

To finish a job, to stop work, the end of a task.

*rainy day*

A time of need, as in old age. "When you're young and able to work hard, you'd better lay up something for a rainy day."

*red letter day*

An unforgettable time, most important occasion. From the ancient custom of printing holy days on calendars in red letters.

*good day for ducks*

A rainy day.

*great day in the morning!*

An exclamation.

*Daylight* can be seen through a small hole.

*to burn daylight*

To waste a light by having it burn in the broad daylight.

*to put daylight through a man*

To shoot him, to kill him.

*daylights*

Common sense, equanimity, coolness, bravery. "When the old sheep rose up in the moonlight and tore out of that penned-in grave, it scared the daylights out of me and I burnt the wind going away from there."

My *days* are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.

*dead* as a dodo

*dead* as a doorknob

*dead* as a doornail

*dead* as a herring

*dead* as a nit

*dead* as a wedge

*dead* as Billy-be-damned

Very dead indeed.

*Dead* men tell no tales.

The *dead* should be carried always head first.

Speak no evil of the *dead*.

The wishes of the *dead* are sacred.

*dead against*

Strongly opposed to, absolutely against. "It seems that the Governor is dead against doing anything harsh or punitive to the Ku Klux."

*dead-broke*

To be absolutely penniless.

*a dead certainty*

An unassailable fact, an undeniable happening.

*in dead earnest*

Absolutely in earnest.

*deaden*

To cut the green bark around a tree so that it will die, same as girdling.

*deadening*

An area where the trees have been killed by girdling.

*deadfall*

A trap made by propping up a board or log so that when a bird or animal touched the baited trigger, the heavy log or plank would fall down and trap or kill the animal or bird.

I remember how when the snow came we children would set up our little deadfalls, scatter cornmeal under them, and often have a string running from the propped-up little post, which held up the wide plank, through the door into the house. Then we would stand by the window. When any of the snowbirds got under the plank, we would jerk the prop out and then dash out with squeals of joy to pick up the little crushed, mute and still warm bodies. Never once did it occur to us that this was cruel. We were just having fun.

*dead giveaway*

A body or facial mien suggesting guilt or evasion. "The way that bond salesman would look off when he was trying to get you to buy stock in the factory was a dead giveaway that there was something about it he didn't believe in."

*dead gone*

Utterly exhausted, tired to death.

*dead hand*

A term used to denote the control of affairs by a person already dead.

In a poker game a hand without any good cards in it.

*deadhead*

A sponger, a bum.

Don't beat a *dead horse*.

*dead letter*

A dead and passed matter, no longer important, out of circulation.

*deadman*

A buried log, or anchor to hold a guy wire, usually made of concrete.

*dead men*

Empty bottles, same as dead soldiers.

*dead of night*

Depths, stillness, middle. "The Ku Kluxes crope upon Uncle Reuben's house in the dead of night."

*dead on one's feet*

To be completely exhausted.

*dead ringer*

An exact copy, a facsimile. "He's a dead ringer for his daddy."

*dead stand*

A dilemma, a precarious fix, to be brought to a standstill, prevented from acting. "He is at a dead stand since they busted up his whiskey still."

*dead to the world*

Unconscious, deep in sleep or drunk.

*to play dead*

To pretend, to be hypocritical. We used to catch 'possums and lay them on the ground, and they would lie still with a queer grin on their faces, and we would say, "Look, he's playing dead." Also playing 'possum.

*to have the dead wood on one*

The advantage, the upper hand. According to Valley tradition the phrase "to have the dead wood on one" got started by way of a crane and a grass snake.

One day a crane saw a grass snake sleeping in the sun and, creeping up, he seized the snake and quick as blinking swallowed him. But the snake was slick and, like croton oil, went through the crane and out again in no time. The crane grabbed up the snake and swallowed him a second time. But jook, glug, glug, and the snake was out once more. The crane did a little thinking. He saw a dead log nearby. The snake tried to wriggle away but the crane grabbed him again, swallowed him the third time and quick as thought jammed his rear end against the log.

"Ho, ho," laughed the crane, "I've got the dead wood on you this time!"

And so he had.

*deaf* as a post

*deaf* as a stone

Who so *deaf* as they that will not hear?

*deaf to reason*

Hardheaded, unreasoning, hopelessly prejudiced. "When it comes to the Negro question, it seems that Mississippi, Georgia and Alabama are deaf to reason."

*dear me!*

An interjection.

At *death* lice and fleas leave a body.

All men are equal in the presence of *death*.

In the midst of life we are in *death*.

### *death bells*

See "death prophecy."

### *death bird*

See "bird omen."

### *death coppers* or *death pennies*

When I was a boy coppers (usually English ha'pennies because of their weight) were used to hold down the eyelids of a dead person till burial. The wild senseless stare of the lifeless open eyes was too much for the survivors to bear. Nowadays the professional undertakers see that all is in order without the pennies, even to the rouged cheeks of the corpse.

### *death dew*

The sweat that is supposed to come on the foreheads of persons when they are dying. "Miss Cate reached over and felt her forehead and said that now the death dew's coming on, it won't be long."

### *death prophecy*

The foreseeing of death to come. I have known many people in the Valley who say they have had this experience in relation to others. My Aunt Emma Blalock said she knew Sister Betty (my mother) had died on that dreadful January day in 1908 because the death bells rang in her head early in the morning and announced its coming to her. She didn't tell any of us about this prophecy, of course, until long after the terrible thing had happened. Most often these prophecies, if the truth be told, turn out to be false alarms. But such was not the case with old Myatt Northington. See "prevision of death."

Of course most everybody laughed at old Myatt and made no little fun of him, for they felt about him the way most of us feel about these ignorant sanctified people who are always prophesying the end of the world on a certain day. And also they remembered Gaster French and his prophecy a few years before. Gaster had got religion at a Pentecostal camp meeting at Falcon and soon after that heard a voice telling him to get ready, for the end of the world was coming soon. So he sold out his little farm and one mule and sat down to wait for Gabriel to blow his horn. This was not hard for him to do, for he was a notoriously lazy fellow. The fateful day came and passed and nothing happened. Of course Gaster had to get up from where he was sitting and go to work again or starve, for the sun rose just the same. Later he died in the county poorhouse. Myatt was a better prophet.

On the day before he was to die he went around to see all the neighbors and say goodbye, asking them for messages they might want to send to loved ones in yonder world. A lot of wags, like Ezzie Gunter, sent messages to folks in hell, including Bull Broadhuss, saying tell Bull he'd like to bring him some ice but he was providentially hindered. Old Myatt laughed and said he wasn't going there where Bull went. And maybe he didn't.

Well, when the next day came, he dressed himself in his burying clothes, put out the two big English coppers he'd saved to place on his dead eyelids to hold them shut, and lay down in his bed. And as the clock struck three, as the vision said, he turned his face to the wall and quietly breathed his last. At his funeral a great concourse of people gathered. And many of them got converted to God because of that, believing that there must be some kind of spirit or spirits that could speak to men and tell them the future if we only knew how to listen and watch. And Ollie McNeill, the local window-shade-catch inventor, was there and was so convinced of it, he tried to make a contraption to listen to spirits talking. He finally lost his mind working at the thing and at his perpetual motion machine and had to be shut up in the asylum in Raleigh. And there they say he hears spirits all the time now and does a lot of preaching to the bare walls behind his restraining iron bars.

### *death speech*

It is widely believed that when a person dying makes a speech, it is one in which he reveals his true nature. Leo Tolstoi's last words, according to his daughter Alexandra, were "Truth—I have love." She also said he struggled to say more but couldn't.

### *death song*

Sometimes a dying person, especially a religious one, will break into a hymn when dying. Nellie Upchurch said her Aunt Laura did.

"There we were," she said, "all sitting around the bed, tears pouring from our eyes, when she started to sing.

'Just as I am without one plea  
But that thy blood was shed for me . . .  
O Lamb of God, I come.'

"Then she said, 'I hear the angels singing,' and she died happy and smiling. And you know, that smile stayed on her face I bet an hour or so."

### *death watch beetle*

The sound of this beetle boring inside a wall is a sign that somebody in that house will soon die.

### *done to death*

Over-cooked.

To wear out a subject in talk.

*dressed to death*

Overdressed, same as dressed to kill.

A man in *debt* is caught in a net.

Oh what a tangled web we weave  
When first we practice to *deceive*.

*hit the deck*

To fall on one's face, to suffer a bad fall, to fling oneself down for safety from an air attack.

*"Deck the Halls"*

Next to "Silent Night," the most popular of our Christmas songs. We always sang it on our Christmas serenades.

*I'll declare!*

An exclamation of emphasis.

*Deeds* speak louder than words.

*deef*

Deaf.

*deep*

Sly, artful, crafty, devious.

*deep* as hell

*deep* as the ocean (sea)

*deep-end*

A morass of trouble, lunacy.

*"Deep River"*

A favorite Negro spiritual.

*deep water*

A difficulty, a dilemma. "Since that Baucom boy splurged so much on his daddy's money, he's now in deep water."

*dehorn*

To deflate, to puncture one's balloon of self-esteem.

*delicate condition*

Pregnancy.

*deliver the goods*

To be reliable, up to scratch, to be able to provide what is required.

*demi-rep*

A person, especially female, of dubious reputation.

as *demure* as an old whore at a christening

*Den*

A boys' out-of-doors game. Each boy is supposed to represent some sort of wild beast and has a separate tree, or rock, or spot which represents his den. Now, any player who leaves his den is liable to be tagged by anyone who has started out after him. The best runner usually ventures first, for, of course, all the young people are not going to stand dead still, for then there would be no game. A second person pursues him, etc. If a player can tag anyone whom he has a right to capture, he takes him on home to his own den, and then this person must be on his side and help him to take the rest. A pursuer cannot be tagged while he is bringing home his game.

See "Ku Klux Klan."

It *depends* on whose ox is gored.

*depth charge*

A deep copulation on the part of a male, and often a braggart will boast of this. "I give that woman a depth charge she'll never forget."

*derisive pantomime*

The putting of one's thumb to the nose and wagging the four spread-out fingers means "kiss my ass." Also the turning of one's posterior in the direction of a person and slapping it with the open palm means the same. The thrumming of one's ear with a forefinger signifies disrespect, "bad cess to you," etc.

*desk together*

In our old Pleasant Union School, space was so lacking that two or more students would occupy the same desk seat. "Can Milton and me desk together, Mr. Biggs?"

*desperated*

Desperate, a desperado, a bandit. As the old song says, "John Hardy was a mean and desperated man, he toted two guns every day."

*despise*

Dislike, be unwilling. "I despise to get my hands all sticky with dough."

*dest*

Desk.

*the deuce!*

A mild expletive.



*the devil*

The fabled evil one who presides over hell and who, as he will, wanders the earth in invisible or visible forms tempting people to do evil so that he may carry their souls off to his everlasting keeping in the infernal fires below. His influence was so widely felt that the people knew him by various names — Beelzebub, Belial, The Evil One, Lucifer, Mephisto, Old Bad Boy, Old Black Boy, Old Harry, Old Ned, Old Nick, Old Scratch, Satan, and so on.

An interjection.

The *devil* can cite scripture for his own purpose.

The *devil* has all the good tunes.

The *devil* is not as black as he is painted.

The *devil* is old and knows a lot.

The *devil* knows his own.

*the devil to pay and no hot pitch*

To be empty-handed.

*The devil you say!*

Usually in question of a statement just made by someone or even as an exclamation of surprise.

Speak of the *devil* and his imps will appear.

He's between the *devil* and the deep blue sea.

Talk about the *devil* and you'll see his smoke.

like the *devil* before day

He swapped the *devil* for the witch.

Give the *devil* his due.

If it rains while the sun is shining, this means that the *devil* is whipping his wife.

looks like the *devil* on horseback

She's the *devil* on wheels.

When the *devil* was sick,  
The *devil* a saint would be.

When the *devil* was well,  
The *devil* a saint was he.

(Nonsense rhyme.)

If you sup with the *devil* you'll need a long spoon.

*devil child*

A child born with the devil in him, sometimes even born with little sprouting horns. It is told that a pregnant woman got angry with a Bible peddler and bawled him out. The next day her baby was born with little horns, showing that the devil had entered into this woman.

*go to the devil!*

An abjuration.

*heat devils*

Little waves of heat that show across a wide field on a hot summer's day. Another name for this is Lazy Lawrence.

*devil's hole*

Any dark and dangerous or frightening place. Many Negroes maintain that in these dark holes the devil's hellhounds live, and if a person comes up and leans over one of these holes on a quiet day, he can hear these hounds barking where the devil keeps them hid away deep in the earth to bring them out at night to run howling across the sky in pursuit of sinful souls.

*devil's music box (devil's instrument)*

The fiddle. Both the fiddle and the banjo have for generations been instruments of evil — the fiddle being first in sinfulness and the banjo a close second — among the strict orthodox Christians in the Valley. In Harnett County where I was born and grew up the fiddle was associated with wild parties and dancing and therefore was the more forbidden.

Tim Messer lived in my neighborhood and was one of the best fiddlers for miles. Hardly any shindig from Linden to Angier to Dunn to Sanford could be held without efforts to get Tim, along with his banjo-picking partner, Sam Adams, to make the music. A fiery and brimstone-hurling preacher, Mr. Roland by name, came to Little Bethel Church one summer and held a two-week meeting there, and such was his power that he cleaned up the sinners far and wide. He even converted Sam Adams and after him the toughest musical wrongdoer of all, Tim Messer. Sam gave his banjo away in his new state of grace and Tim was ordered by the preacher to burn his fiddle. The poor fellow almost wept over the verdict and finally compromised with himself by wrapping it up in thick quilting and secretly burying it under a holly tree behind the barn. He even took care to put a double layer of planks over it the way folks did over the coffins of the dead.

In time Sam Adams backslid and repossessed his banjo. Under his pleading and a merry flooding of a few godless tunes he played to Tim's thirsty ears, Tim himself backslid also and dug up his fiddle.

"You had it buried mighty snug and safe," said Sam, who was helping

him in the disinterring.

"Yeh, I wouldn't have it hurt for a purty," said Tim.

"And from the planking and all it seemed like you might a-had in mind the time when we'd — we'd be going back into sin."

"It don't matter now," said Tim as he laid the bow sweetly across the strings and sent out a swirl of sounds.

After that, folks said Tim's fiddle was better than ever, and where he was a fine fiddler before, from now on he was the greatest to be found from Fayetteville to Raleigh.

Tim later was killed in France in World War I. I've never been able to learn what happened to his fiddle. See "crying shame."

*the devil's papers*

Playing cards.

*devil's pincushion*

The cactus.

*devil's riding horse*

The praying mantis.

*devil's snuffbox*

A puffball.

*devil's walking stick*

A thorny shrub known also as the Mexican mulberry or Hercules' club. Also known as prickly ash. It grew in abundance on the plantation of my ancestor, Colonel Alexander McAllister.

An idle brain is the *devil's workshop*.

*dew*

Sweat.

No *dew* in the morning foretells rain.

If a girl washes her face in *dew* on the first of May, her beauty will be helped.

*dewfall*

The evening time.

*dew poison*

Sores that come on the feet and legs of children who go barefooted in the summertime.

*mountain dew*

Corn liquor, also recently the name of a popular carbonated drink.

Heavy *dews* portend no rain.

*diacumbellicos*

Diarrhea.

It takes a *diamond* to cut a *diamond*.

*diamond in the rough*

A sterling but uncouth person.

*diarrhea of the mouth, the jaws*

Gossip, frothy talk, said of a garrulous person.

*dibble-dabble*

A mess, a stir, a messy mixture.

*dibs*

Claims. "I've got dibs on that hat!" Often the same as dabs.

*dice*

The results, the answer, payment, etc. "I went for my check, but no dice."

*dick*

Abbreviation for dictionary.

The penis. The young suitor at the table spilled hot coffee on his leg. His sweetheart anxiously inquired, "Did it hurt you, Dick?" "No, it just burnt my leg a bit," he answered.

*queer dick*

Same as queer duck, a square, a misfit.

*the dickens!*

A mild expletive.

*diddies*

Titties.

*diddle*

To cheat, make a fool of.

To copulate, to indulge in sexual play, especially with the fingers.

*diddle-daddle*

Foolishness, idly messing about.

*Diddle, diddle, dumpling*, my son John,  
Went to bed with his britches on.  
One shoe off and one shoe on,  
Diddle, diddle, dumpling, my son John.  
(A baby rhyme.)

*did do*

Emphasis on do. "After all he did do it."

*didies*

Diminutive for diapers.

*didn't go to*

Didn't mean or intend to. "I didn't go to hurt you like that."

*die* like a dog

Die shamefully, bankrupt, in the ditch.

*die* like a rat*die* like a rat in his hole

You will *die* when your time comes and not before.

as well *die* with the disease as with the remedy

*die-back*

Dying twigs or limblets of shrubs or trees. "When I cut the die-back out, the tree will look better."

*die in harness*

To end one's days hard at work as usual.

He that *dies* pays all debts.

*die with one's boots on*

Usually refers to one who is killed in a gun fight, to die in action.

*differ*

To quarrel. "The two Matthews brothers are differing again, and the next thing you know they'll both be back in court."

as *different* as day and night

*Different* sores must have *different* salves.

*difficulty*

A quarrel, a controversy.

Two brothers in the Valley were notorious for constant difficulty one with the other. They had fallen out over a little strip of hog lane that ran between their farms, each claiming it as his. Again and again they would be listed in the county paper's court docket as "Johnson versus Johnson," the trial would be held, and one would win a victory. Then the other would file a counter suit. So it was that as time went on the village lawyers got the majority of their cotton and tobacco money.

One August at an especially fervent protracted meeting held by that

mighty preacher, hairy Neill Hodge, the two brothers got converted. So all filled with brotherly love and spiritual grace now, they met, hugged each other and wept in each other's arms.

That evening when they got back home these newly washed and purified souls went out to have a look at the strip of land, which by this time had become known in the neighborhood as "the Devil's Lane." Standing there side by side and in good fellowship, they considered the cause of their animosity and their conversation ran as follows—

"I'll declare," said John or Young, it makes no difference which, "ain't it a sight to think that you and me all these years have been suing one another over this little old bitty piece of land?"

"That it is. It's a sight," said Young.

"I been thinking a lot since we stood up for the right hand of fellowship at church this morning," said John.

"So have I too," said Young.

"And I tell you what I'm going to do," said John. "I'm going to give up my part of this Devil's Lane complete. I want you to have it."

"That's what I been thinking about," said Young. "I want you to have it, John."

"Nah, nah," said John, "it's yours, Young. I give it to you and I'll have the deed drawn come Monday morning in the courthouse, denoting it's yours."

"No, I can't allow that," said Young. "I'll have the deed drawn in your name."

"Dad blame it," said John, getting a little testy. "It's yours, Young."

"Well, dadgum," said Young, "it's your'n, John, and that's the last I want to hear about it. Your'n!"

"I won't take it," said John.

"Yes, you will," said Young.

"You got to take it yourself," said John, "and that'll show you there ain't no more hard feeling in my heart agin' you and that I'm gonna live in a state of grace from now on."

"No, you take it, and that'll show you how I feel and am gonna live."

"I'm the oldest," said John, "and my word ought to count. It's your'n."

"You remember what Pa used to say, John. He said, 'John, Young may be younger than you in years, but he's got a better head on him.' "

"Well, I reckon I ain't never heard of that before," says John, getting a little more ficey-like.

"Well, that's what Pa said, and I say on account of my judgment being better—"

"Your judgment ain't better," says John. "I deny that on a stack of Bibles a mile high."

"So you don't think Pa said it, do you?" said Young, getting somewhat red in the face.

"No, I don't," said John. "I don't believe he said it."

"Well, I reckon you know what that makes me," said Young, "makes me out an outdacious liar."

"Well!" said John.

"Well!" said Young. And there they stood looking at each other, their eyes turning red as a terrapin's. And Young hitched up his britches and his hands quiled themselves up into two fists. "Ain't nobody ever called me a liar before and got away with it," he said.

"And I reckon there ain't nobody that ever drawed back his fists that made me take cover," said John. And with that they squared off and started walking around each other like two game roosters looking for the first chance to make an attack. Seeing an opening, Young suddenly hauled off and ker-blip let John have it in the burr of the ear. That brought him down to his knees and Young flew on him, but John came back butting at him and got him in the pit of the stomach and piled him over in the weeds.

And from then on they had it, fighting and gouging. Finally some neighbors came along and separated them or I reckon they would have killed each other. For by that time Young was chewing on John's ear and had it about half-eaten off and John had got one of Young's fingers in his mouth and was chewing it to a pulp.

At the next term of court there was the same old notice in the newspaper, "Johnson versus Johnson," and assault and battery was the charge this time, one against the other.

They were tried in the court and both put under a peace bond, and the judge had the lane re-surveyed. A line was run down the middle of it, and the court ordered a fence put up along the line. Now for a good long time John and Young have lived in peace, and each one still stays on his side of the wire fence.

But since the big fight between them, neither one has been the man he was. The side of John's head is still disfigured, his looking like a dried-up prune, and Young's hand is about half useless because the long finger John chewed on remains stuck out, stiff as a stick and useless.

Old Dan Truelove, the 90-year-old surveyor and godless liquor reprobate, said that's what they got for messing with religion. If they had stayed away from that preacher, he said, they'd be hale, hearty men to this day. But then old Dan didn't have much more character than an egg-thieving dog, being a tattletale and liar the way he was, and no attention was paid to him. And besides, as everybody knew, he was drinking himself fast into the grave and had been doing so for the last fifty years.

*Difficulties* are opportunities.

*Through difficulties to the stars — Ad astra per aspera*

This is the Latin motto of Campbell University and many states and institutions.

*dig*

An uncomplimentary reference. "Jesse Helms in his regular Viewpoint T.V. appearance took a dig at you the other night, Paul," said the barber as I sat down to get a haircut.

*digger*

A hippy, a no'count young sponger, beatnik.

*well-digger*

A lady's man, a swordsman. "Who are you?" said the lady. "I'm a well-digger," I said, and I showed her. "Lordy mercy," she said, "you really are!"

Many a person *digs* his grave with his teeth.

*dig up the tomahawk*

To start trouble. To begin a war.

*diked out (or up)*

To be in one's best dress, wearing Sunday clothes. "Lord, I'm here to tell you, he was all diked out for commencement day."

By *diligence* and care

You may finally get there.

(Folk wisdom rhyme.)

*a diller-a-dollar*

Late, tardy, from the child's rhyme:

A diller-a-dollar

A ten o'clock scholar.

*dime*

A great many people, especially Negroes, used to put holes through dimes and wear them around their necks or ankles to prevent toothache, rheumatism and blood disease. A few still do.

Put a *dime* around a baby's neck to make him cut teeth easier.

*a dime a dozen*

Very cheap.

*dimple*

To curtsy, to flirt.



*Dimple* on the chin,  
The devil within.

*Old Aunt Dinah*

A cutting up, loud behavior. "He got out there and, me, my, did he play Old Aunt Dinah."

*dinahs*

Cheap little marbles, usually to be put into the ring with others like them to be shot out.

*din-din*

Dinner, food, baby's pap, milk from the mother's breast.

*ding-buster*

A humdinger, an important thing or happening.

*ding-dong*

To quarrel, to complain.

The buttocks, the setter. "I'll rap on that boy's ding-dong if he messes with me."

*dinger*

A fine example, an outstanding thing. Same as dilly.

*ding it in*

To instill it in one's memory by constant repetition.

*dingus*

The penis.

*dinky*

A trifle, cheap looking, silly, disgusting. "And then for all his big talk, he showed up on Sunday courting me riding the dinkiest little old mule you ever saw."

*dinner*

The midday meal.

*The dinner bell* is always in tune to a hungry man.

There never was a fieldhand that found the *dinner bell* out of tune.

*dip*

Syrup or gravy.

*dipper gourd*

A dipper made from a gourd.

*dipping*

A baptizing by immersion.

*dipso*

A dipsomaniac, an alcoholic.

*dipsy-doodle*

Silly, irresponsible. "You wouldn't want a dipsy-doodle fellow like George Wallace for president, would you?"

*directly (torectly)*

Right away, soon. "You go ahead, I'll be up there directly."

*dirt*

Uncomplimentary gossip about a person.

Obscene talk.

Everybody eats a peck of *dirt* before he dies.

*dirt cheap*

Very cheap indeed.

*do dirt*

To treat wrong, unfairly, to injure. "He done me dirt when he took my girl from me, and this switchblade knife says I'm gonna get even with him."

*eat dirt*

To accept humiliation. Same as eat crow.

*to dirty*

To defecate. "I got to go dirty first, and then I'll be with you."

as *dirty* as a hog (pig)

*dirty work at the crossroads*

Suspicious doings, secret criminal acts.

*discord*

A way of tuning a fiddle to produce a harmonious effect when the bow is drawn across two or more strings at the same time. "I can't play that piece right lessen I discord my fiddle first."

*Discretion* is the better part of valor.

*the running mouth disease*

Over-talkative, gossipy, frothy-worded.

*disencourage*

To discourage.

*disfurnish*

To unfurnish, fail to furnish.

*dish*

A woman, usually a complimentary term. "She was a pretty dish, all right."

*dished in*

Bowlegged, also cranksided.

*dished out*

The angle at which the spokes of a wheel become weakened. "There that old wagon stood with its wheels dished out." Also handed out, a retaliatory action.

*dishfaced*

A flat face, concave. "That dishfaced fice dog of his was one of the best coon dogs I've ever seen."

*dishrag*

Weakwilled, long-suffering, patient. "He's nothing but a dishrag under his new wife's feet."

*dishwater*

Feeble stuff, imitation, poor argument. "Lady, this soup ain't nothing but dishwater."

*dismals*

The blues, the mulligrubs, the melancholies.

*disposed to*

Inclined toward, in favor of. "My son is disposed to Duke instead of Carolina."

*disrecollect*

To forget, to fail to remember.

*disremember*

Unable to remember, not to remember. "He's just moved into that house up there where the road turns to Farrington, but I disremember his name."

*distaff side*

The woman side.

*Distance* lends enchantment to the view.

*to ditch*

To jilt.

*div*

Dived, past tense of dive.

*to dive in*

To begin, to start eating, to initiate an action.

“Yes, sir,” said Herbert, “just as soon as grace was said at a meal in our house, my daddy would call out, ‘Dive in, folkses!’ I remember one night when we really did dive, and we dived in such a hurry that we got our ding-dong rapped on to a fare-you-well because of it.

“In the old days we didn’t get hold of good beef meat often. Well, once the old man went into town with a bale of cotton to sell, and I guess he wanted to sort of reward us young’uns — there were five of us — for all our hard work in the cottonpatch, and he brung back a great big piece of steak which Ma fried and put the platter of it on the table. And there we all were sitting ready to get at it. The grace was said — ‘Make us thankful for what we’re ’bout to receive, amen,’ —and just as Pa said ‘Dive in, folkses,’ a gust of wind blew out the lamp. Well, when Ma got the lamp lighted again, there sat the old man with five forks sticking in his arm, and his fork was sticking in the steak. We young’uns had made for the steak but in the dark he was ahead of us. Pa looked at us as we pulled our forks out one by one, then made for the firestick over in the chimney corner. And then — man, man, did he ding-dong our ding-dongs.”

A house *divided* against itself cannot stand.

*dividing molasses* (whiskey, wine or other liquid)

A measurement puzzle. A man came to a neighbor to get four quarts of molasses. He brought an eight-quart jug, but he wanted only four quarts, no more, no less. The neighbor had a cask of molasses but only three-quart and five-quart measuring containers. How did he get exactly four quarts measured out?

He poured the three-quart container full, emptied this into the five-quart container, drew the three-quart container full again and emptied two quarts into the five-quart container, filling it and leaving one quart over. He then emptied the five quarts back into the cask, poured the one quart into the five-quart one, drew three more quarts and poured that in with the one, making four quarts exactly.

*divine power*

An omnipotent god who, it is believed, controls the universe and all that’s in it.

*divining rod*

See “dowsing rod.”

*“Dixie”*

The whooping-up song of Southern patriotism. It was written, words and music, by a Yankee, one Dan D. Emmett, in 1859 for use in a minstrel show. Since the minstrels were black, the association of the tune with the South was easy. The song also became popular in the North and is now part of our American heritage. It was reported that when President Lincoln first heard it in 1860 in New York City, he shouted out from his box, “Let’s have it again!” Gradually the name Dixie was accepted as meaning the Confederate South — “Dixie Land.” The word “Dixie,” the linguists say, comes from the French *dix*, *dixie*, a \$10 note widely current in Louisiana before the Civil War. So in this matter it seems that for once paper money was really worth its weight in gold, pure gold.

At Buie’s Creek Academy’s commencement when I was a boy, Professor Portis and his brass ensemble (we proudly called it a brass band) would, for a climax to their playing, tear loose in “Dixie.” Without failing, the audience in the Old Tabernacle Building would stand up and yell and shout and wave handkerchiefs and hats in the air. Under the spell of the song the Old South was ready to rise again.

*Dixie*

The South.

*dizzy-dance*

A wild and crazy dance, especially a holy dance of one caught in a religious hallucination, as often the case with the Holy Rollers.

*do*

Task, duty. “Do your do, fellow, that’s all God asks of you.”

Swindle. “I bought some stock in that fish factory in Wilmington, and did that man do me.”

Fit, serve satisfactorily, be reliable, trustworthy. “This Richard Nixon just won’t do.”

To behave or act towards one. “Why do you do me like you do?”

*Do* as I say and not as I *do*.

*Do* as you would be done by.

*Do* it, then talk about it.

*Do* one thing at a time.

*do* or die

*Do* unto others as you would have them *do* unto you.

Never *do* anything of which you are ashamed.

They who can't *do* as they would must *do* as they can.

You never know what you can *do* till you try.

*Do As I Do*

A tricking game.

*doated* (doaty)

Decayed.

*dobbin'*

Daubing.

*doc*

A colloquial address of familiarity to a man. "Hey, doc, better stay out of that house or that old woman will fly on you like a wet hen."

as *docile* as a sheep

In nettle and *out dock*.

Dock shall have a new smock.

(Nonsense rhyme.)

New *doctor*, new churchyard.

*Doctor, doctor*, can you tell

What will make poor Annie well?

She is sick and she might die.

That would make poor Johnny cry.

(In this teasing rhyme, the name of any one of the group may be substituted.)

If the *doctor* cures, the sun sees it,

And if he kills, the earth hides it.

*what the doctor ordered*

The proper remedy. "Miss Molly Ferrell was forty years old and then she got married, and that was just what the doctor ordered."

*doctor-snake*

The partner of a wounded snake, or another snake that comes and makes the wounded one well. This, no doubt, comes from the fact that often a snake being left for dead revives and escapes. Of course, it may be that the mate of the wounded snake is seen in the surroundings.

*do-dads*

Frills, ornaments, little odds and ends.

*Dodge Ball*

This is played in different ways. Usually the players are divided into two teams, and the members of one team form a circle while those of the other team get inside the circle. The first team has a volley ball or some soft ball and, when the signal is given, this ball is thrown at members of the team inside the circle. Anyone who is hit must either drop out of the game or join the circle, according to an agreement. Finally, when all have been hit, the game is over, and sides change. Those who were in the circle now can go inside, and those inside become the circle, and the game proceeds again.

*dod rabbit! (drabbit!)*

An expletive.

*do-funny*

An outlandish thing or person, a foolish trinket.

A *dog* howling at night presages someone's death in the neighborhood.

A *dog* in the manger neither eats nor lets others eat.

A *dog* is man's best friend.

A *dog* runs for his character, but a hog runs for his life.

A *dog* that bites off its own tail sets a bad example for the puppies.

The *dog* that fetches will also carry.

A *dog* that will bring a bone will carry one.

If you give a *dog* a bad name, you'd just as well kill him.

The hit *dog* always hollers.

It's a poor *dog* can't wag his own tail.

A good *dog* deserves a good bone.

a lean *dog* for a long chase

as many excuses as a *dog* has fleas

Every *dog* has his day.

Every *dog* has his day and the bitch her evenings.

I don't need a *dog* if I have to do my own barking.

A living *dog* is better than a dead lion.

Let a *dog* lick a sore place to make it well.

It is hard to teach an old *dog* new tricks.

Keep a *dog* tied up too long and he'll lose his nose for the trail.

every *dog* to his own vomit

A *dog* will not cry if you beat him with a bone.

*dog biscuit*

Army hardtack.

*dog bite him! (it!)*

An execration.

*dog cheap*

Excessively cheap.

*dog damn!*

An expletive.

*dog days*

The hot days in August when diseases are most rampant. In the old days typhoid fever used to break out especially in this hot time.

*dog-down*

For emphasis, same as stomp-down. "He's a dog-down (stomp-down) gentleman."

*dog-drunk*

Completely drunk.

*dog fennel*

A plant common everywhere, except in the extreme North. Found in waste places and along roadsides. In the old days tea made from its foliage or root was used for all sorts of troubles — nerves, overweight and stomach disorders.

*dog-fight*

A ruckus, a loud quarrel.

*hair of the dog*

A homeopathic remedy in which the medicine to cure the sickness is that which caused it, such as a drink or drinks of liquor the morning after. "Hey, Paul, I've just come over here to see if you'd let me have a little hair of the dog."

*By doggies!*

An expletive.

*'Y doggies!*

An exclamation.



*Doggone!*

An exclamation.

*doggoned*

A trifling person. "He's the doggonedest fellow I've ever seen."

*doggy*

Stylish, a wearer of sporty clothes.

*in the doghouse*

Disfavor, disgrace. "He's in the doghouse now, and his wife won't speak to him."

*dog in the manger*

A snarly person who selfishly prevents another's good luck or advantage with no gain to himself.

*dog Latin*

A barbaric made-up language by the transposition of a vowel, especially "A," in front of a consonant, or at the beginning of a word.

*dog leg*

A chevron stripe.

*dogleg fence*

Worn rail fence.

*dog on the sun*

A splotch of foggy light above the sun, usually in the morning, which indicates a change in the weather.

*dog run (trot)*

The covered passageway between two parts of a cabin or house, same as breezeway or windsweep.

*like a suck-egg dog*

Low-down, sneaky, starveling.

*dogs*

Feet. "Let's rest, my dogs are killing me."

*Dogs* follow the man with the bone.

Lie down with the *dogs* and you'll get up with the fleas.

Let sleeping *dogs* lie.

Barking *dogs* rarely bite.

Old *dogs* bark sitting down and puppies standing up.

*the dog's foot*

An interjection.

*dog's life*

Miserable life. Sometimes said facetiously in observation of the ease of a well-kept pet.

A *dog's nose* and a maid's knees are always cold.

*go to the dogs*

To degenerate, to become dissipated, to fall to low estate. Same as to go to the bow-wows.

*dog-stud*

A childless husband, usually supposed to be barren.

*dog's tail*

The constellation of the Great Bear. Same as dipper with the handle and drinking gourd.

*in a dog's tail*

A rebutting comment. Same as in a pig's eye.

*dog tallow*

An early kind of round, white stick chewing gum.

*dog-tired*

Tired to death, to the bone, exhausted.

*dog-trick*

A mean trick, a practical joke.

*dog-trots*

Diarrhea.

*dogwood*

A beautiful flowering southern tree.

When the *dogwood* blooms it is planting time.

When *dogwood* leaves are the size of squirrels' ears it is time to plant corn.

Land where *dogwood* trees grow well will, when cleared, grow the best cotton.

*dogwood winter*

A cold spell that often comes when the dogwoods are in bloom, comparable to blackberry winter.

*do-hickey (do-hinke)*

A thing, an item, a device. "Undo that do-hickey there and it will fall apart."

*Do how?*

A query. What? It is used to ask one to repeat a question.

*doing*

Why? What's the reason for, etc. "What are those books doing here?"

*Doing* everything is *doing* nothing.

*Doing* nothing is *doing* ill.

*doings*

Celebrations, activities, fun. "There's big doings at our house tonight."

*do it*

To finish, to complete. "That'll just about do it."

*do it up*

Wrap up, tie up.

*do it up brown*

Finish a thing with extraordinary care, put the fine touch to a thing.

*dolefuls*

The melancholies, the dumps, the mulligrubs. "Since her sweetheart kicked her, Fanny stays drooped up in the dolefuls."

He squeezes the *dollar* til the eagle screams.

If you would know the value of a *dollar*, try to borrow one.

*Dollar, Dollar, Where's the Dollar*

A game which is usually played by having chairs placed in a circle with a person sitting in each one, and "It," or the person who has the dollar with which to do the guessing, stands in the center. The people sitting in the circle pass a silver dollar or coin from hand to hand. The object is to keep the person in the center from guessing whose hand has the dollar. And while the dollar is being passed around, the players sing or chant:

Dollar, dollar, how you wander  
From one hand into the other.  
Is it fair, is it fair  
To keep Mr. Henry standing there?

The name of the actual person is used in the last line. When the guess is made correctly, the one in whose hand the dollar was when it was guessed goes into the center, and the center man takes his seat.

*dollars to doughnuts*

Usually in the form of a jocular dare or wager. "It's dollars to doughnuts

those two will never marry.”

*dolly*

A mistress.

*do-lolly*

A thingamajig, a contraption.

*domestic*

Unbleached muslin, or clean white cloth, used in the old days especially for bed sheets and often for boys’ underwear.

*domestic trouble*

Menstrual period.

*done*

For emphasis. “I done forgot what you said.”

Dead. “Don’t shoot him anymore, he’s done.”

Well-cooked. “This corn is not done, you’ll have to put it back on the stove.”

What is *done* cannot be undone.

When a thing is *done*, it’s done.

It is easier said than *done*.

*done for*

To be finished, ruined, killed.

*done gone and done it*

Used for emphasis.

*done in*

Same as all in, exhausted.

*done to death*

Overdone, trite, over-familiar, tiresome.

*done up*

Completely exhausted, ruined. “I’ve been scouring all day, and tonight I’m plumb done up.”

Tied up, put in a package. “The laundry is all done up.”

*dony*

A sexy female sweetheart.

*do-nothing*

An inactive, a lazy person.

*Don't* call on the Lord unless you know his name.

*don't care*

Slovenliness, laziness, improvidence. "Don't care keeps a big house."

*dontcha?*

Don't you?

*Don't* go around your elbow to get to your thumb.

*Don't make me laugh.*

A jocular expostulation.

*don't mind me*

A semi-satirical phrase suggesting that the speaker or one acting has little care for "me."

*doodads*

Fineries, trinkets and jewelry.

*doodle*

A little insect, more professionally known as an ant lion. He drills a little top-like hole with dry sand grains around it, and an ant who tumbles over the edge keeps falling toward the center because of the loosening grains, and there the doodle waits to seize him and have his feast.

To play with a woman's private parts.

*doodlebug*

There was a folk belief in our neighborhood that if you put your finger down in the doodle's house and stirred it around and around and chanted the following couplet, the doodle would appear. Naturally he would, because the finger would dig him out, that is, if he was there at all.

"Doodlebug, doodlebug,  
Your house burning up,  
Doodlebug, doodlebug,  
Your house burning up."

*doodler*

A trifler.

*doodly-squat*

A faux pas, a goof.

*doo-jiggers*

A thingamajig, a contraption, usually small things.

*the crack of doom*

The instant when the end of the world comes, a bit of the Bible folklore.

*doomsday*

A folk term designating the end of time. It also means an indefinite length of time. "Hurry up, you expect me to wait here til doomsday?"

*do one's business*

To evacuate, to defecate, and often in Negro terminology "to void."

*do one's stuff*

To show one's ability or character. "Get out there on that mound, Bob, and do your stuff." Same as show your stuff.

*doorknob*

A white china knob. My mother used to take all the eggs from a laying hen and leave a doorknob in the nest to keep the hen coming back, for it was well understood that if all the eggs were taken away the hen would quit laying in that nest and hunt another place, or quit laying altogether. The doorknob fooled her and she still apparently thought there was one egg left.

The *doors* of wisdom are never shut.

*next door to*

Almost, nearing, coming nigh. "He is next door to being crazy as a coot."

*do out of*

To cheat, to chouse.

*do over*

Remake, re-do.

*doozy*

A lily, a honey, a lulu, an exceptional thing, good or bad.

*dope*

Instructions, the lie of things, the facts. "Say, miss, what's the dope on this Rinaki murder?"

Coca-Cola.

*dopey*

Dull, lethargic.

*do pray*

A mild expletive, also a comment of encouragement to continue talking.

*do proud*

To make one proud. "She sure did me proud up there on that rostrum with

all the people looking on."

*dose*

Enough of, a surfeit. "I've had my dose of these politicians."

Venereal disease. "He kept going to that sporting house and finally got his dose."

*do-se-do*

A command or call in a square dance.

*like a dose of salts*

Quickly, of almost instant reaction.

*on the dot*

Punctual, at an appointed hour.

*Do tell!*

An exclamation.

*do the trick*

To be satisfactory, to solve. "He got a long wire and slipped it through the door and that did the trick."

*do time*

To serve a sentence in prison or on the chain gang.

*doty (doaty)*

Decayed, somewhat rotten. Also means weak in one's head, a bit crazy.

*dot your I's and cross your T's*

Tend to small things, be circumspect, be attentive and polite.

*a double*

A copy, a likeness. "I looked up there and thought it was John, but it was that Henry boy, his very double."

*double-barreled*

A big breasted woman. "Yonder she comes down the street all double-barreling at us."

*double damn*

For emphasis.

*double duck fit*

A frenzy, a burst of excessive temper, etc.

*double harness*

Marriage.

*double-jointed*

A long, tall person. Large, muscular. This term has pretty much passed out of usage now that so many double-jointed young men are becoming basketball heroes.

*double-take*

An exaggerated visual response. "He did a double-take."

*doubting Thomas*

A suspicious person, one demanding special proof or incontrovertible evidence. The Gospel of John, Chapter 20, verse 25, reports that Thomas, one of the twelve disciples, said he doubted that Jesus had risen from the dead. "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails — and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe," he declared.

*doubtsome*

Doubtful.

*douce!*

An expletive. My father used to use this word very often. It was common with him. "The douce you say!" He pronounced it "dowse." Perhaps this is a corruption of deuce.

*doughface*

A mask. Also homely, ugly.

*doughy*

Sticky. "That clay path is all doughy after the rain."

*do up*

To tie, to wrap. "Do up the clothes, the laundry man'll be here in a minute."

*do up brown*

To deal with a matter or person thoroughly and authoritatively.

*dove*

A gentle girl.

A *dove* hovering around a house presages death.

*down*

Sick.

Melancholic.

To drink, to swallow. "He downed six beers, one right after the other."

*Down* is not always out.

He that is *down* need fear no fall.



*down and out*

In a penniless or spiritless condition. Also, to be knocked out as in the prize ring.

*down in the dumps*

Despondent, discouraged, same as down in the mouth.

*down in the l'ins* (loins)

To be crippled in the back, unable to raise up the hind part. "Well, Betty, I've been up to the hog pen, and my big fattening hog is down in the l'ins," said my father one doleful winter morning. "I'll have to kill him."

*down in the mouth*

Discouraged, melancholic, sad, pensive. "Every time I see Joe Knapp he looks down in the mouth. How come?"

*down my alley*

Suitable to my ability, just what I wanted.

*down on*

To dislike. "He's down on me, that's why I never get a promotion."

*down pat*

To have by memory, full know-how.

*down the country*

A bawling out, a tirade against. "With that sharp tongue she could give a man down the country."

*down the drain*

Wasted, lost, gone beyond recall.

*down the road*

In a weakened or incurable condition, aged. "Too bad but old John is down the road."

*down to the bottom of the barrel*

The last penny, to the last crumb or bit of supply, down to one's last chip.

*down to the ground*

To the limit, extremely. "Everybody was plumb ashamed down to the ground."

*dowsing rod*

A forked twig or small limb fork, usually from a hazel bush, used to locate underground springs and good places for digging wells. I've known dowsers who claimed that a peachtree fork or even dogwood would work just as well. And some more scientific ones now say that metal rods held before

the dowser as he walks will do the trick too.

Recently I looked out through the window of my work cabin and saw a man moving back and forth in the meadow with two little rods extended in front of him. A service truck with the big insignia of the University of North Carolina (*Lux et Libertas*) on its side stood near by, and two other men were standing leaning against it. Curious, I left off working on my "Cross and Sword" play and went out and asked the gentleman what he was up to — if he didn't mind saying. He said he was locating a water line. In his hands he held two little brass rods sticking far out at right angles from his hands and free to swivel in the small metal collar pieces he grasped.

"When these rods start cutting up, I will be near the pipe," he said.

"You mean they will tell you where it is?" I asked somewhat incredulously.

"Sure do," he said. "And when I get right over the pipe, the rods will cross themselves one over the other in front of me and stay crossed. Yes, sir."

"Wonderful," I said. But I didn't believe it, for just the night before I had been reading a lot of stuff Joseph Wood Krutch had written about the New England dowsers.

I stood around quite awhile watching this representative of the University trying to find the pipe.

"Doesn't the University have a survey that shows where it has laid its pipelines?" I asked.

"Not this one," he said, "It's a private line to your house anyhow and hooks up to the main line yonder in the Raleigh Road."

"Yes, but the University put it in. Maybe you did," I said, "though I paid for it."

"I might have," he said, "but I've put in so many I can't remember them all."

He kept walking around to no avail, and I began mentally to estimate the cost he and his truck and the two fellows were penalizing the taxpayers.

Seeing at last that he wasn't making any progress, I told him I knew where the water line was, and so I showed him.

"I remember the day it was put in," I said, "and it went along near this pine here, first to my cabin and then on by it to the house." The information didn't seem to matter to him one way or the other.

"I would a-found it afterwhile anyhow," he said. "These rods never fail me. Now if it's terra cotta pipe, that's another thing. Clay don't seem to attract them, but metal does. When I walk in the woods, for instance, say, on Sunday, I carry a pair of these with me — not just these two, for they belong to the University Buildings Department, but two like them. You never know when you might be walking over metal or even silver or gold in the ground," he said.

"Will they find silver and gold too?" I queried.

"I'm sure they will," he said.

"I wonder if I could get me a set of these rods?" I asked.

"Sure thing," he said, "just phone Mr. Branch at the Buildings Department and he'll fix you up." He now called out to the two men at the truck, "Heigh, fellows, bring your shovels, Mr. Paul says this is where we'll have to dig."

The next day I called up Mr. Branch and for two dollars he ordered me a set of rods. I now keep them on my wall to look at and, I guess, to remind me that all of us are folklorists and filled with folk customs and superstitions from the cradle to the grave. I had first tried them out before I laid them up.

Sometime after this, two scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology were visiting us. I told them about the rods and showed them to them. When I started to replace them on the mantel, one of the scientists took them again in his hand and felt them. Then I saw "that look" come into his eyes.

"I believe I'll go out and try them," he said. We went outside and for a good while he too wandered up and down the meadow holding them extended in front of him. Presently he came back and handed them to me.

"There's nothing to it, of course," he said.

The other scientist laughed a bit jeeringly. "I mark that 'of course,' he said. "Then why did you try them?"

"Just a prank," the other one said.

As we started back to the house, the second scientist said, "Wait a minute, I believe I'll try those things too."

I handed him the rods.

### *Doxology*

I can still see Mr. Tom Long, with his white beard, standing up in old Pleasant Union Church in the days when they had no organ and leading off this song in his strong hollow voice, a voice that used to send the shivers down my spine as a little boy sitting there awed by the great presence.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him, all creatures here below,  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

Orthodoxy is my *doxy*.

### *baker's dozen*

Generosity, one extra, thirteen.

### *thirteen to the dozen*

Outlandish, wild, exaggerated.

*twelve to the dozen*

Honesty, good measurement. "He always gave you twelve to the dozen."

*put him in the dozens*

To berate, to shame.

*drabble-tail (draggle-tail)*

A slovenly woman, a slut.

*drag*

Influence, power. "He's got a lot of drag with the boss."

A term in fox hunting.

*dragass*

A procrastinator, a deadbeat, one who moves slowly, wastes time.

*dragged out*

Feeble, feeling poorly.

*dragging feet*

Slowness, lethargy, deadbeating.

*dragging one's spurs*

To be exhausted, excessively lazy, soldiering on the job.

*draggle-tail*

A slovenly, dirty person, usually in reference to a woman, a trollop, a slattern.

*drag hound*

A dog especially trained to follow the scent of a drag.

*drap*

Drop. "He drapped corn all the morning barefooted and he's tard out."

*drat*

A mild swear word. Drat it, drat him, drat you, drat that thing, etc.

*draw a long bow*

To exaggerate, to tell a lie or wild stories.

To act authoritatively, to be a man of power.

*draw in one's horns*

To economize, cut down on plans, or withdraw from an argument.

*draw it fine*

To run a close risk, to make a fine distinction.

*draw straws*

A method of deciding a bet or luck or something to be done. Usually the

one drawing the short straw is the unlucky person, and the one drawing the longest straw the lucky.

*draw up*

To shrink, shrivel. "After I fell in the creek my seersucker suit drew up so I couldn't wear it."

To move closer, draw nearer. "Draw your chair up to the fire and warm yourself."

Always take a *dream* backwards.

*dream book*

The Sears-Roebuck catalog. Same as wish book.

*dreen*

Drain.

*dregs*

Drugs.

*drench*

To dose with liquid orally. "I've got to drench my mule, he's all drooped up." See "twitch."

*dressed for the part*

To fit a part, to have an appearance that fits one's calling.

*dressed to kill*

Overdressed.

*dressed within an inch of his (her) life*

Overdressed, outlandishly dressed.

*a dressing down*

A bawling out, a scolding, a berating, a tirade against.

*dressy*

Especially fastidious, smart and elaborate.

*dribble derby*

A basketball tournament.

*driblets*

Tiny bits, piecemeal things. "She just practices her Beethoven in driblets."

*drips and drabs*

Bits and shreds.

*dried apple damn!*

A mild expletive. "I don't give a dried apple damn" means "I don't give

a hoot,” “don’t care,” etc.

*drift*

A herd, as a drift of cattle.

Intent, meaning. “I catch your drift, brother.”

*drill*

To plug, to put a bullet in the exact spot. “He drilled that guy right between the eyes.”

To teach, to instruct thoroughly.

In rows, to sow in the drill. “He drilled his wheat this year and he’s got a better stand.”

*drink*

The ocean, the water. “He had to set the plane down in the drink.”

*drinking gourd*

The Great Bear in the Northern sky with its pointers toward the North Star, often called the dipper, or box with the handle to it or the drinking gourd. This last was the term mainly used in the old days by the Negroes. In slave times a slave escaping to the North was told to follow the drinking gourd. There is a plaintive folk song entitled, “Follow the drinking gourd, follow, follow, follow, follow.” The chords of a guitar go well with it.

Sitting with Mr. Mac, the old miller and local historian, in his mill house one night I heard the story of a slave named Jim who escaped from the Valley to the North by following the drinking gourd. He traveled at night and lay hid in the woods and swamps in the daytime. He followed it to a future of great success, a success, however great, that couldn’t kill off the influence of his childhood raising.

“This Jim was born in slavery,” said Mr. Mac, “and, with his father and mother, belonged to old Colonel Silas Montgomery down in the lower part of the Valley. His father was a Negro overseer on the colonel’s plantation, and a proud and sullen sort of fellow they said he was. This Jim, as he grew up, got a smidgin of book learning from his father and mother and, by the lightwood fire at night and with the door to the cabin shut tight, he heard bitter talk from his father about the oppression of the black man and how there was no haven or ’biding place for the poor nigger unless he could escape to the North. That idea got into the boy Jim’s head and stuck there. With the connivance of his father and mother, he finally did escape, carrying what money they could get up for him and his old McGuffey spelling book. With the blessing of his parents he slipped away and by following the drinking gourd finally made his way to the North. The old colonel suspected the father and mother and for revenge sold them both separately

down the river toward New Orleans. So they disappeared from the Valley and were never heard of again.

"This boy Jim must have had the real stuff in him, for somehow he beat his way up. No doubt some of the Northern white folks, nigger lovers they called them, helped him. Anyway he got a chance to go on to school, finally studying law, and by the time he was a middle-aged man, he had married himself an almost white wife and had a big business going. The Civil War came on and passed, and the South, as the local orators have put it ever since, 'lay under the despoiler's heel.' Many changes took place. The people that had been powerful and rich before now became helpless and poor. And some who had been nothing but poor white rose up to places of wealth and domination like them tobacco kings around Durham and Winston-Salem. Jim had sent many an inquiry about his parents but could never hear anything as to what had happened to them. Over the years he subscribed to a Valley newspaper, hoping to keep up with news of things 'back home.'

"Well, one day this Honorable James Montgomery sitting in his fine office there in Boston read in the paper about how the famous old plantation of Colonel Montgomery was going to be sold. The family was in hard straits and now that the colonel was dead and the widow, his old missus, was left alone, she was having to sell all the heirlooms and so on in order to keep soul and body together. James had a hankering to go back to see the place of his birth, and also he had the daring thought now that he might go back there and maybe buy some of those heirlooms himself. Who knows, he might even see about buying the plantation itself. And thus some of the shame and suffering of his people would be wiped away and he would be the proud avenger of their wrongs. So he got his several trunks together, had them packed, and set off south.

"When he got down to Washington, he had to change trains and go into the Jim Crow car as was the custom then. It took two or three porters to handle his baggage, and one of them joked at him saying, 'Well suh, ya' boss sho' has got a lot of baggage. Must be one of them diplomats or something.' The Honorable James politely informed them that it was his own baggage. 'And where are you going with it?' one of the porters, who happened to be a Southern Negro, asked him. He said he was going back to North Carolina. The Negro broke into laughter and said something about maybe that was being too much of a good thing and he better watch out. James thought it over and finally decided it might be wiser to leave some of his baggage behind. He was proud and had planned on the big impression he was to make back in the old home neighborhood, and it was hard to forego that. But still when his train pulled out headed south, half his baggage remained behind. And it was a somewhat sobered James who sat in the Jim Crow car as the train crossed the Potomac. All around him were Negroes

of the poorer class.

"All day he rode through red hills, sandy fields, pine forests with paintless houses, and weatherbeaten shacks which dotted the landscape. He saw the Negroes working in the fields, gathering corn or picking cotton, and the sight of a young boy standing with a sack string over his shoulder staring close at the train as it went by brought back to him the old feeling when he as a slave had labored in the fields and gazed at the carriages of the white planters or their proud wives passing on the highway.

"Down at Raleigh he had to change trains again. In those days the town was much smaller, and the finely dressed Negro attracted a lot of attention from the few hangers-on around the depot. By this time the Honorable James was becoming full of the old South feeling and was conscious now how his appearance stuck out in sharp contrast to the surroundings. Well, when the little woodburning train drew up to take him down the Valley, he had already checked the rest of his trunks in the baggage room and carried only his fine hog-skin brown valise. Through the swamps and little clearings the train went. A sense of the poverty and darkness of ignorance descended on him, and when he got off at the little home station he was forlorn and unhappy enough. A few Negroes and poor whites were at the siding. The 'one-gallused' agent looked at him in astonishment. And James was glad to get away as soon as possible. When he asked a nearby Negro if there were any 'conveyance' that might take him out to the old Montgomery Plantation, the Negro broke into deep dog-yelping chuckles.

" 'Big Boy,' he said when he had got control of himself, 'they ain't no conveyance and furderno' besides' — And his voice died out, as he bowed up and down again, slapping his thighs.

" 'What's the matter with you?' asked the Honorable James.

" 'Ain't nothing, nothing,' said the Negro. 'But 'uhm reckon they is too. It's them gold specs you wear and them bandbox clothes, and yo' shiny grip. Whew, they do tickle me.'

"Other Negroes and whites standing about laughed and showed they were tickled too.

"James left his suitcase in the station and set out walking down the long sandy road. But the farther he walked, the more the warm remembrance of the past, the smells and sights and sounds of his boyhood, came back to him. He soon began to recognize the boundaries of the colonel's ancient plantation and there was the big oak tree by the creek they said the colonel hung one of his slaves on one time. And over there toward the Bear Cat Swamp was the field he and his parents had labored in many a day, chopping and picking cotton.

"The Honorable James stopped and looked about him. Then he did a strange thing. He took off his fine hat and coat and laid them behind a bush by the road and went on bareheaded, with his white shirt and his silver-



buckled suspenders shining in the sun. Soon he met a ragged sweaty Negro toiling along toward him. The Negro was a little drunk, and that's maybe how it all happened. Anyhow, it was said that the Honorable James stopped and talked with him a while. And then they went off into the bushes together. Pretty soon out came the drunk wearing the fine clothes and the Honorable James wearing the ragged ones, greasy cap and all. He went on and turned into the lane toward the old Montgomery mansion. The drunk stood watching him a while, then threw up his hands and staggered on his way.

"The Honorable James went up the walk to the old mansion. He started to mount the sagging steps to the wide columned, paint-peeled portico, then stopped, turned and went around the house. At the back he knocked on a sagging bannister. Soon the kitchen door opened and a little old white-haired woman came shakily out.

" 'Yes?' said the little old woman, peering down at the ragged Negro standing before her, 'what do you want?'

" 'I—I'— said the Honorable James. Then suddenly his hand went up and pulled off his cap and his words blurted from him — 'Missus, missus, your boy Jim done come home again.' "

### *drinking whiskey*

Especially fine mellow whiskey fit for drinking without weakening with water or soda. "Freddy B. always says, 'Uhm, that's good drinking whiskey.' "

### *"Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes"*

A popular favorite often sung on picnics, hayrides, etc.

### *drip*

Nonsense, empty talk.

### *drive like the devil*

### *drive one up the wall*

To run one to distraction, to infuriate.

Don't *drive* in where you can't turn around to get out.

### *in the driver's seat*

To be in charge, to be on top, to have the position of authority.

### *drive two horses*

Show off, splurge.

### *dromedary*

A husband who is put upon.

### *drooped up (droopy)*

Sick, ailing.

*droop-tailed*

Discouraged, down in the mouth, unhappy.

*droopy-ass*

Same as dragass.

*droopy-drawers*

A slouchy, unkempt girl, also a dull and stupid girl, much the same as drip.

*drop*

To give birth to. "My cow dropped her calf last night."

*drop a bomb*

To create a stir, an excitement, like making a shocking remark at a party, or disclosing horrifying tidings.

*drop a stitch*

To make a faux pas, an error, a mistake.

*drop by*

Come by incidentally on one's way from another place. "While you're in Dunn could you drop by Grantham's Drug Store and get me one bottle of Cardui and two bottles of Lydia Pinkham's Compound."

*drop corn*

In the old days people dropped corn in an open furrow and covered it with a foot. How often hour after hour have I dropped two or three grains in the furrow, stretched out my right bare foot and swept the dirt over it and stepped on it, then took two steps forward and repeated the act over and over, round and round, and the sun burning down on me.

*Drop dead!*

Term of reproach or anger or reprimand. "When the reporter tried to interview Adam Clayton Powell, all the interview he got was the snarled out words, 'Drop dead.' "

*drop in on*

To visit unexpectedly or incidentally.

*drop in the bucket*

A bit, a trifling amount. "\$10,000 is only a drop in the bucket compared to his total salary."

*at the drop of a hat*

Quickly, instantly, at once. "He'll fight you at the drop of a hat."

*drop off*

To go to sleep, to take a nap. "Dr. Lay could lie down and drop off for

ten minutes any time he wanted to.”

*drop one's uppers*

To be totally surprised, suddenly shocked. This expression originated from the failure of ill-fitting false teeth to hold when the wearer opened his mouth suddenly in surprise.

Little *drops of water*,  
Little grains of sand,  
Make the mighty ocean  
And the pleasant land.

*dropsy*

The habit of dropping things, loose-fingered. “Seems like I’ve got the dropsy today the worst a-tall.”

A folk term also for edema, an abnormal accumulation of serous fluids in the body.

*cure for dropsy*

In an old notebook I found the following prescription for it — “One tablespoon of steel dust, two tablespoons of powdered snake root, two tablespoons of ginger root, two of dogwood root bark, two of black China tree bark, two of low myrtle root bark, and mix with honey or molasses until soft. A dose was one half of a teaspoonful three times a day.” The patient was asked to avoid damp air and wet feet. As my friend Dr. Leonard Fields says, “It’s a wonder that as many people survived these old cures as did.”

*Drop the Handkerchief*

A game. What fun we used to have playing this, and when little Lattie Matthews got the handkerchief and was running around, how my heart beat hoping she would drop it behind me. Players form in a circle standing up, and one of the number is outside. He runs around the ring and drops the handkerchief behind a chosen player. Then the latter grabs up the handkerchief and chases after the other. And if the dropper of the handkerchief is caught before he can get around to the spot vacated by his pursuer, then he can be kissed and must go into the center of the circle. Here he is to remain until he can seize the place of another player by getting the handkerchief up before the latter player can discover the handkerchief behind him and grab it. When this lucky one has succeeded in doing this, he becomes the next dropper, and the player from whom he snatched the handkerchief must go into the center.

*dross*

Waste rosin from turpentine stills, used to start fires in the old days.

If men had their *drothers*,  
There'd be no room for others.

*a drought*

A long spell without a drink of liquor. The governors of North and South Carolina had this in mind no doubt when they agreed that it was "a long time between drinks."

In a *drought* all signs fail.

*drove hard and put up muddy*

To be overworked, to be badly treated, to work hard and have little to show for it.

*drownd*

Drown.

A *drowning* man will clutch at a straw.

*drudge*

Dredge.

*drug out*

Tired, exhausted.

*drugs*

Dregs.

*drugstore cowboy*

A derisive term for a loud talker, a loafer.

*drummer*

A traveling salesman.

*drunk* as a boiled owl

*drunk* as a coot

*drunk* as a dog (hog)

*drunk* as a doodle

*drunk* as a fiddler's bitch

*drunk* as a lord

*drunk* as an owl

*drunk* as a sailor

*drunk* as blazes

A man shows his real nature when he's *drunk*.

*on a drunk*

On a spell of drunkenness, a boozing tear.

*drunkards*

Small flies in fermenting fruit or fruit juice. "Put them grapes away or else the drunkards will be after them."

*Drury Lane Theatre*

A temporary hall in Fayetteville for theatrical performances, named for the famous old Drury Lane Theater in London. According to some of the old playbills I found in the archives at Williamsburg, Virginia, a traveling actor by the name of Llewellyn Lechmere Wall came into Fayetteville in the late century. He played various roles with a Mrs. Herndon, and afterward settled down in the town. He gave guitar and lute lessons to the young gentlemen and ladies at five shillings apiece. Another old handwritten playbill I found announced a production of "Robinson Crusoe," showing a dance of the savages, the rescue of Crusoe's man Friday, also a curious dwarf dance, etc., etc., "the whole to conclude with an Epilogue, addressed to everybody, not aimed at anybody, to be spoken by somebody in the character of nobody — tickets 1/6, pitt 5 shillings to be had at the Drewry (sic) Lane Theatre."

Another — this a large lettered printed playbill I found — announced "An Evening's Lounge" in the Fayetteville Theatre, presumably the Drury Lane, for December 31, 1795, "An antidote for the spleen." Mr. and Mrs. Henderson "from the theatre Charleston" were starred, offering "several pieces selected and comprised in several parts, where the follies of life are exposed in laughable and striking colours — being a satirical, whimsical, humorous, moral and illustrative dissertation and display of the passions, humours, whims and oddities in song and dialogue . . . with Dibdin's 'Sound Argument' or 'Let us all be unhappy together.' "

Mr. and Mrs. Henderson also offered selections from "The School for Scandal" and numerous other items of entertainment, including John Bull's comic song, "Expedition to Church."

*druthers*

Rathers, wishes, preferences as before. "If I had my druthers, I'd stay in bed all day."

*druv, driv*

Past tense of drive.

*dry*

Thirsty. "I'm so dry I have to prime myself to spit."

A wry, comic way.

*a dry*

One who is opposed to liquor or alcohol in any form.

*dry as a bone*

*dry as a chip*

*dry as a stick*

*dry as dust*

*dry drizzle*

A light sprinkle of rain.

*dry grins*

Chagrin, embarrassment.

*dry heaves*

Retchings without actually vomiting.

*dry hole*

A failure, a hole which gives neither water nor oil.

*drying room*

A place where tobacco is hung on sticks to dry out.

*dry-rot*

A sinking into ineffectuality. "He quit going to Broadway and he sat down there in the South and just dry-rotted."

*a dry run*

Empty results, a phrase used in seining. Sometimes in Middle Prong Creek when we'd run the seine along a deep hole and lift it up with nothing in it, one of the boys would call out "a dry run." Another one might say "a water haul."

*dry shave*

A shave without lather. As a boy I once heard of the story of a stingy Irishman who came into Lillington to get a shave. He asked the barber about the price, and the barber said a dry shave would cost him a nickel and a wet lather shave would cost him a dime. The stingy Irishman said, "Gimme the dry shave." While he was being shaved, a donkey tied down in the street below let loose a wild and terrific braying. The barber jerked up his head. "What in the name of goodness is that," he said. "Why," said the Irishman, "that's another man getting a dry shave."

To skin, cheat, to deceive.

*dry up*

Hush, stop weeping, to cease making a racket or noise. "Dry up your blubbering or I'll whup you again."

*to dry up lard*

To put chunks of pork fat into a pot and boil it, same as drying up fat.

In *dry weather* all signs fail.

*dry wilts*

Emaciation of old age. "What do you know! Old Bill Searcy's done married a right young pullet and him with the dry wilts."

*d.t.'s*

Delirium tremens. The wild hallucinations that seize upon alcoholics sometimes when excessive drink has fired their brain to ruination.

*duborous*

Dubious, same as jubious.

*dubersome*

Doubtful.

*dubs*

Doubles. This is an expression we would use in playing marbles. If one player happened to knock out two dinahs at one time, he could keep them if he shouted "dubs" ahead of one of the other players who might cry out "venture dubs." In case the venture dubs man was first, he would have to put one of the marbles back. The same applied to "thribs" (threes), etc.

*duchess*

A madam who keeps a brothel.

*duck*

Usually used with "queer." "He's a queer duck." A peculiar person.

*duck fit*

Hysterics, an explosion of temper.

*duck in*

Visit hurriedly. "Just duck in and see what's cooking."

*duck-legged*

One with very short waddly legs.

*duck out*

Slip away, escape.

*duck puddle*

A muddy, mirey place, the delight of ducks.

*duck soup*

Something easy, pleasant. "Standing up and reciting before folks is just duck soup to her."

*duck walk*

A waddling walking.

*dead duck*

One who has lost out, no longer influential, worse off than a lame duck.

*lame duck*

An office-holder who has been defeated for reelection. During the remainder of his term he is spoken of as a lame duck and his term is a lame duck term, ineffective.

*Lord love a duck.*

A mild expletive.

like water off a *duck's* back

*make ducks and drakes of*

To make a mess of things, to scramble matters.

*get ducks in a row*

Have things all shipshape, organized, fixed. "You better have your ducks in a row before you go up there and try out for that School of the Arts."

*ducky*

An expression of fondness, usually from a man to a woman. Safe and snug, everything fine. "Yessir, all is ducky at my house."

*dud*

A failure.

A dull, empty-pated person.

*duds*

Sunday clothes, dress-up clothes. "He dressed up in his best duds while the earthquake was on, saying he was getting ready to go to meet his Lord."

*dueling*

A barbaric practice in the old days when with pistols or swords for honor's sake men tried to kill each other. The last duel I heard of in the Valley took place between old Miles Stevens and young Robert Jefferson.

"Yes," said Uncle Myron Lassiter as we were sitting by his fire one winter night, "fighting duels has long gone out of fashion — between



individuals — men, that is. But the nations keep on doing it crazy as ever. It takes humanity in the mass a lot longer to learn anything than it does a man singly, I reckon.

“Well, old Miles Stevens was a big landowner here at the upper end of the Valley before the Civil War and owned a lot of slaves to boot. He was one of the most highfalutin and prideful men, my daddy said, that ever was. After the war his slaves were freed, but it seemed to make no difference to old Miles. He was just as proudish as ever. Though his worldly goods had shrunk mightily, he still kept his aristocratic ways and lorded it over folks. He used to wear a wide white pleated shirt and top hat and a wing collar and swelled-up black tie, and he carried a silver-headed walking stick and wore a square coat that hung down like the one Governor Hoey wears now. Perhaps the most noted feature about him though was his nose, big and red and I mean red — maybe from drinking so much cherry bounce when he could get it. And wherever old Miles appeared — him and his big face and nose and clothes — he made an impression on everybody. As I say, he was an aristocrat of the old South, sure enough. And as for size he was over six feet high and weighed well over two hundred pounds, my daddy said.

“He lived up there in Haywood, and Haywood was right much of a town in the old days. Must have been five or six hundred people there. It was built in the forks where the Haw and Deep Rivers come together to make the Cape Fear. There were three churches, a Presbyterian church, a Baptist church, and a Methodist. Might have been an Episcopalian too, but I disremember. But anyhow, I know there were at least three churches. And there was a drugstore and a big hotel run by old Captain Brown — but it’s all passed away now and gone.”

“I was out there a few years ago and saw the remnants of the old hotel,” I said.

“Yes, there was a big hotel and mighty fine house there, a race track and plenty of betting and gambling and cockfighting going on in those days. The aristocratic Scotchmen from way down toward Fayetteville and Wilmington would come up there in the summer with their families to get away from the chills and fever down in the lowland. And so old Haywood was right much of a place and had a lot of big folks in it, as I say.

“About the biggest one in it of course was old Miles Stevens. Now there was another special fellow there in Haywood and no aristocrat. His name was Bob Jefferson. In fact, he was a grandson of one of the poor white Jeffersons who had been a bound boy in his young days to old Miles’ father. Bob had the stuff in him, though, and he had worked himself up and finally got a pretty good grocery store. Miles would run up an account there in the store and wouldn’t pay him. Bob would send him a notice and old Miles would ignore it. Sometimes he’d meet Miles on the street and tip his hat

polite enough and say 'Mr. Miles, I'm needing that account settled mighty bad.' And Miles would look down his big nose at him and nod, and say, 'I'll be taking care of it right away as soon as I get some money that is overdue me from my investments.' And in fact he did now and then pay a little on his debt, if he happened to sell a bit of timber off his dwindling piece of land. But all the time his indebtedness to Bob increased.

"Finally, young Bob lost his patience. He was a kind of waggish fellow, too, and one day when old Miles come walking into his store in his pompous way and started to pick up some oranges and English walnuts and put them in a paper bag without a by-your-leave, Bob's temper began to boil. Miles had his Negro boy with him to tote the groceries and fruit home, and poor Bob just didn't have the grit to tell him no, for all his boiling. But while he was standing there, with old Miles getting his groceries together, his mind was a-working. So when he weighed the groceries and handed them over to old Miles, what did he do? He just reached out and grabbed old Miles by his big red nose and give it a terrible twist to right and left. Then he broke out laughing.

"Well, that was a foolish thing to do, as you might imagine. And why Bob done that I don't know. Maybe it was just some kind of a wild impulse that made him seize it all of a sudden. Anyhow, as I said, old Miles' nose had got to be much like a headlight from his drinking so much cherry bounce and highland liquor, and maybe it stood out like the challenge of a headlight or something. Anyhow, when Bob give it that twist, Miles let out a yell. He staggered back, dropped his groceries and, with his hand to his tortured member, declared to all and sundry that his honor had been insulted.

"Bob then said he didn't care a hoot about his honor, he wanted his money. His courage had begun to rise by this time, I reckon. Old Miles couldn't take that, so with his insulted honor he drew himself up to his full six feet and said, 'I challenge you to a duel, seh. My seconds will wait on you. I bid you good day!' And he swept out of the store swirling his cane in front of him. The Negro boy grabbed up the groceries and followed.

"One of the neighbors, acting as Miles' second, did come down and have a huddle with Bob. He might have been beholden to Bob, I don't know. But anyhow, he and Bob fairly cooked up a deal between them — after Bob cussed old Miles out and said the damned scoundrel hadn't paid a red brownie on his bill in eighteen months, and he'd do anything to get even with him, for he knew he never was going to pay it. Of course, the duel business had been outlawed in North Carolina fifty years before that, but old Miles' honor went away back beyond the outlawing, and so he resorted to this manner of settlement.

"Now according to the law of dueling, I've been told (and old Miles knew all about it), the challenged man, that is, Bob, had the right of choosing the weapons. So Bob ups and tells the second that he would choose

blunderbuss pistols. He had a couple of these old critters that had been given to him by an old soldier, and he had them back there in the store. So they brought 'em out and figured out how to load 'em with cap and ball and get ready for the duel.

"Well, down that way," and Uncle Myron gestured, "lived Dr. Wyche. He was an awful good doctor, that fellow was, and they called on him and put him onto the secret, and the secret was this — they would go through with the duel, but they would make the whole thing a prank. At Bob's suggestion, thinking of that big white shirt front, no doubt, they decided to load one of the big blunderbusses with a heavy charge of ripe pokeberries, for it was the time of the year for them and they were all standing around in the fence jambs just hanging down. That would be Bob's pistol. The other would have only a charge of powder and paper wadding in it.

"So, next morning, bright and early, they met as planned out on the field of honor — a potato patch — some distance outside of Haywood. Dr. Wyche was there with his instrument case. He opened it up and laid his saws and forceps and bandages out while the seconds conferred. And old Miles, as grim and as grave as a judge, and with a special shirt on now, shining brighter than ever, all ironed up with his collar and big black tie accompanying for the occasion — was waiting directions.

"These are your instructions, gentlemen," the seconds said. 'You will stand back to back with your pistols raised, and you'll march eight paces, and at the word "fire," turn and fire.'

"Old Miles put a devastating eye on Bob and asked did he have any last words that he wanted to say on earth. 'That's just what I was going to ask you, sir,' said Bob, but his teeth were chattering, and he was acting like a man scared out of his wits. He knew old Miles' pistol didn't have a thing in it but a weak charge of powder and paper while his own was loaded with an extra heavy charge of powder and the rest of the barrel jammed tight with a long wad of them ripe pokeberries. But he acted scared just the same.

"So they put themselves back to back and the seconds counted. The two opponents started walking away, and at the word 'fire' they turned and fired. And they said Bob's pistol sounded like a small cannon had gone off. Well sir, that charge of pokeberries come out of Bob's gun in such a terrific wad and at such speed, it hit old Miles right smack on that shirt bosom, spattered all over his face and knocked him flat on his back. His own blunderbuss had just fired paper into the air, of course.

"They all rushed up to Miles and made a terrible to-do over him, whooping and hollering and carrying on. Now old Miles' wife and daughter had got word of the duel and they had pleaded with him not to go through with it, but he had insisted, and the wife was at home that very minute, weeping and grieving. It happened that Miles' granddaughter, Lucy Belle

Bryant, whose parents lived in Raleigh, was visiting the Stevenses at this time, and she had added her voice trying to persuade the old man from his foolish and dangerous course. But no go. And so unbeknownst to Miles, Lucy Belle and his old-maid daughter Pearl had followed to the field of honor and hid themselves behind a tree nearby. When Pearl saw her daddy fall and with a terrible mess of blood all over his shirt and splashed up in his face, she let out a scream and started back across the fields home, crying as loud as she could, 'Lord God, Mom, he's shot. Papa's shot clean through the heart, and his blood and brains are splattered all over him.' And she run wailing through the town telling the dreadful news. But Lucy Belle hurried over to the fallen grandfather. And that's how she and Bob Jefferson first met up with each other.

"So it was they laid old Miles out under a tree and were gathered sorrowful around him. And Lucy Belle tried to kneel by him and do what she could, but Bob with his arm around her lifted her away and said it was too terrible a sight for her to endure. He no doubt was afraid for her to get too close to Miles right then for she might get onto the fact that all the blood was all a fake. And too she was mighty purty and maybe Bob didn't mind lifting her off just to be doing it. The fellows took off their hats now, and the doctor knelt by and examined Miles. Bob stood there holding Lucy Belle by the hand to keep her from getting too close, his face all broke up and said he never meant no harm and was sorry as he could be. The doctor told Miles how he didn't 'spect he had long to be on earth, did he have any last words, any unfinished business to attend to.

"Well, the old scoundrel said maybe he hadn't lived just right but at the time he couldn't think of any particular sins he had committed lately and the Old Master would have to take him as he was, bless his name, for he would understand and pardon the weakness of the flesh and his love for his dram which he had been taking as a morning pyeartner for his health's sake — lo these many years — Amen. And then Bob, mad as hops, asked him what about the bill he owed at the store. Old Miles said yes, it was a sin, that was, that he hadn't paid it. He realized it now, he said, and he didn't want to go to meet his Maker with that on his conscience and that he had a little money from the last turpentine he had sold and to tell his wife, his brokenhearted widow, and his desolated daughter and weeping granddaughter to take care of this debt, because after all it was a debt of honor.

"But the granddaughter Lucy Belle there wasn't really weeping now, for by Bob's winking at her and making some signs to her with his hands where Miles couldn't see, she was beginning to catch on, and so she was more pretending to weep than not.

"And then Bob called on all to witness that the dying man had promised that his debt at the store would be paid. They all said, 'That's right,' they

were witness to the fact and they'd see to it that the debt was paid.

"After this then they all broke out laughing, and it didn't take old Miles but a minute to catch on. And he didn't say a word. He was fighting mad, but he didn't say a word. He climbed to his feet, got his hat and cane and marched straight off, walking proud as ever to his buggy and so drove away. Bob had to take Lucy Belle home in his buggy, and that's how their courtship began.

"Well, in no time the story was everywhere, and the people were bending up and down and shouting and hollering with laughter all along the streets of Haywood. Old Miles took to his house and stayed shut up for weeks. But finally his proud spirit broke down, and he came forth again. And in church on Sunday he stood up in front of everybody and acknowledged his foolishness and sinfulness, saying that from this time forth he was going to live a different and better life. So he said, and people believed him — for a while they did. But to tell you the truth, he didn't change one iota, and when he died a couple of years later he still owed his account to Bob. But Bob said he didn't mind now, not at all. In fact he considered the account paid in full and more than in full and had marked it off the books, for out of it all he got Lucy Belle for a loving wife."

### *duff*

Doff. "He duffed his hat."

Posterior, the buttocks. "The thing to do is get up off your duff and go to work and forget your troubles — as long as you keep talking about 'em to that head shrinker you'll never get well."

### *duffer*

A codger, a stiff fellow, a useless fellow, often used in reference to an older man.

### *dugs*

Titties.

### *dukes*

Fists or hands. "Put up your dukes there, and I don't mean maybe!"

*dull* as a froe

*dull* as dishwater

*dull* as ditch water

*dumb* as a dog

*dumb* as an ox

*dumb* as a post  
Silent.

*dumb* as a wedge

*dumb baby*

An effigy made in human form, usually out of old clothes or rags or old sheets, with a soot-painted horrible face, and used to frighten people, especially children.

Sometimes we young folks in prankishness would make a dumb baby and put it in an older person's bed under the sheet so that when that person pulled back the covers at night to go to bed he would find this thing glaring at him and be terribly frightened.

Louis Clark told me of the time he and Tatum Brown, a pal of his, went to see a couple of fast girls in Clinton. As part of their fun they made a dumb baby and put it in the father's bed upstairs. They were sitting in the parlor courting away and, as Louis put it, getting in the short rows with the girls, when they heard a yell upstairs and the old man came tearing down as if frightened to death, and dressed only in his shirttail. He had come into the house the back way and they hadn't heard him. He was sobbing and pretending that the ha'n'ts were after him, and every now and then he would lift his shirt and wipe his eyes, scandalizing everybody with his nakedness. Louis and Tatum were so outdone and flabbergasted that they hurried out of the house, climbed into their buggy and drove away from there. "We thought we were bold enough," said Louis, "but when the old man stood there, and pulled his shirt up and scandalized us again and again, we knew we'd had enough. No, we never did go back to see them girls and when one of them had a woods colt boy born on her later and went about for a while saying it was mine or Tatum's, she was entirely wrong. We hadn't got that far with the girls that night, though no doubt we would have if the fool old man hadn't come in earlier than we expected. Yessir."

*dumb bull*

A section of a hollow log with a rawhide covering like a drum, pierced by a thong, which, when pulled, makes a roaring sound.

*dumb cluck*

A stupid person, a dullard.

*dumb critters*

Farm animals — horses, mules, cows.

*dumb devil*

Sometimes we country juvenile delinquents would creep up to someone's house, usually a farmer we didn't like, and put a dumb devil on him. We'd

take a tin bucket and tie a string to it and fasten the string to the house weatherboarding. Then we'd rub rosin back and forth. It made a strange weird sound.

***dumb Dora***

A stupid girl.

***dummy***

An effigy. "They made a dummy of Governor Reagan and burnt him on the campus."

***dump***

A sorry place, a slum, a ghetto.

Defecate. "I've got to go take a dump."

To break off relations with, to quit, to set aside. "When Prince Hal became King he dumped old Falstaff and his former cronies."

***dump into one's lap***

To put the responsibility on.

***dumpling***

A term of endearment.

***dumps***

The blues, glooms, the dismals, usually "down in the dumps."

***dunce cap***

A tall paper cap put on a student's head as punishment for misbehaving. The student usually was sent to stand in the corner of the room wearing the cap.

***dunghill***

The field near the house used for dung. No doubt it got its name from the fact that during the night the members of the house would slip out and tend to their natural needs in the surrounding field.

***durn!***

An expletive, same as dern.

***dursn't***

Dare not.

***dusk-down***

Twilight.

***dust***

A small amount, especially of meal or flour. "He wouldn't lend me but a dust of meal for all my begging."

To put insect poison on farm plants, such as tobacco and cotton. "I finished dusting my tobacco last night, but it took me on into the moonlight."

Speed. "Mess with me, bo, and I'll show you my dust."

He who blows *dust* will fill his own eyes.

*throw dust in one's eyes*

To confuse, to mislead.

*dust off*

To throw a baseball intentionally too close to a batter. "Every time old Bull of the Woods hung over the plate with his bat I dusted him off with a fast ball."

*dutch*

Bad luck, a hard situation, a difficulty. "I got in dutch with her old daddy that time I kept her out too late."

*Dutch auction*

The sale of specific items by reducing the price a certain amount each day until they are bought.

*Dutch concert*

A songfest or gathering where everyone plays or sings a different tune at the same time.

*go dutch*

To share costs equally, each one to pay his own expense, say, at a dinner.

*Dutchman's breeches*

A patch of blue in the sky, something denoting clearing weather. There's a belief that if you see enough sky to make a Dutchman's pair of pants, the weather will clear.

*Dutch treat*

A get-together where each one treats himself, same as going Dutch.

*dying day*

A phrase of emphasis as to duration. "I'll hear that man crying as he fell from the derrick till my dying day."

*Dying* is as natural as living.

*dynamite*

A powerful thing, a hyperactive person, a go-getter.

Anything dangerous or likely to cause a stir. "Perversion is dynamite when it comes to politics."

High grade narcotics.



# E

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## *each*

Itch.

From *each* according to his ability and to *each* according to his needs.

*Each* man prays to his own God.

## *eager-beaver*

A go-getter, one who seeks opportunities.

He spreads himself like an *eagle*.

He's like an *eagle* among crows.

## *to ear*

To bear ears, as of corn or wheat. "My corn eared well this year because there was plenty of rain in July."

The heaviest *ear* of corn hangs its head the lowest.

## *ear cleaner*

An ivory toilet article, spoon-shaped at one end. Sears and Roebuck sold them years ago for 10¢. "Add 1 cent postage."

Deaf in one *ear* and can't hear out of the other.

## *put a flea (bug) in one's ear*

To give a hint, to tip off.

## *throw out on one's ear*

To be unceremoniously kicked or dumped out, fired.

## *in one ear and out the other*

Pay little attention to, not care for, nor remember.

The *early* bird catches the worm.

*Early* rest makes *early* rising sure.

*Early* to bed and *early* to rise  
Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.

*earrings*

A decoration in the ears. I can remember the to-do at our house when one of my sisters would get her ears pierced. She endured suffering in order to wear the ornament. In the old days sailors wore earrings because it was believed that they would protect them from drowning.

*ears*

The handles of a pot or jug.

Two *ears* don't mean you hear twice.

There are *ears* on both sides of the fence.

He that hath *ears* to hear let him hear.

When your *ears* burn, someone is talking about you.

*beat back one's ears*

To overcome in an argument, or to whip in a fight.

*can't hear one's ears*

Not being able to hear. "There's so much racket going on in the courtroom the judge can't hear his ears. Silence! Silence!"

*pin one's ears back*

Same as beat back.

The poetry of *earth* is never dead.

*earth apple*

Jerusalem artichoke. The bulbs are edible, nutritious and were much prized as a food by the Indians.

*no earthly good (use, chance, way, etc.)*

No good whatsoever.

*earwig*

A little insect that is often thought to crawl into a person's ear and make his home there. I have heard an older person say to a young one who happened to lie down on the ground, "You better watch out, the earwigs will get inside your head."

*ease oneself*

To relieve the bowels.

*ease up on*

To creep up on. "I eased up on that rabbit asleep and grabbed him with both my hands."

It is *easier* said than done.

It is *easier* to tear down than to build up.

*east*

Yeast.

*East* is east and west is west,  
And never the twain shall meet.

*East* or west,  
Home is best.

*east and west*

A burial custom with the feet to the east, the head to the west. See "Second Coming."

*Easter eggs*

The custom of painting eggs in all sorts of colors in the old days and putting them on the table for decoration. We also used to hide them about the premises and have children hunt for them, giving some sort of prize to the one who found the most. "In our Easter egg hunt that little crippled Upchurch boy found the most."

*easy* as eating

*easy* as falling off a log

*easy* as one and one make two

*easy* as pie

*easy* as taking candy from a baby

*easy* as taking money from home

*easy* come, *easy* go

*Easy* is as *easy* does.

It's *easy* to win a race when you run by yourself.

*easy does it*

To do a thing in a relaxed manner.

*easy meat*

A girl easily persuaded to sexual intercourse. Also a fall guy, one it is easy

to get the best of.

*easy on the trigger*

Quick on the trigger, irritable, quick to anger.

*easy street*

Financially secure. Also used ironically as on welfare, government relief.

*easy to look at*

Pretty.

*easy virtue*

Sexually loose, as a woman of easy virtue.

*eat*

The flavor, taste. "If you slice ham too thin it doesn't eat good."

*eat (eat up)*

To cheat, to get the best of. "That Joe Ligon will eat you up in a land trade if you don't watch out."

To worry, to pester, to trouble. "There's something always eating him, I don't know what it is."

*Eat* an apple a day  
To keep the doctor away.

*Eat* an onion a day  
To keep everybody away.

*Eat*, drink and be merry for tomorrow you may die.

Jack Spratt could *eat* no fat,  
His wife could *eat* no lean,  
And so you see between them both  
They licked the platter clean.

*eat crow*

To have to retract one's statement, to change one's attitude, be forced to recant. "President Johnson and the War Department had to eat crow over that Vietnam War, and there was plenty for everybody."

*eat dust*

Accept humiliation, same as to eat humble pie, eat crow.

*eat humble pie*

To apologize humbly, to be subservient. Much like eat crow.

*eating table*

The dining room table. "Take these flowers, child, and put them on the eating table."

*eat my hat!*

An asseveration, used for emphasis. "I'll tell you what I'll do — if he wins first place in that contest, I'll eat my hat — and eat it without salt."

*eat one out of house and home*

To devour one's substance, to be improvident. "The way you folks behave you're going to be et out of house and home."

*eat one's head off*

To be gluttonous, devouring. "Them old mules just eat their heads off and still stay poor as quilting frames."

*eat one's heart out*

To suffer greatly and in silence.

*eats*

Food.

*eats* like a bird

*eats* like a hog (pig)

He that *eats* the kernel must crack the nut.

*eat up*

Berate excessively, or even to love excessively. "That fellow was so mad he about et me up." "Up at Buckhorn I met a widow woman, and before the picnic was over I thought she'd eat me up."

*Eavesdroppers* hear no good of themselves.

*edge*

To be partly intoxicated, showing a bit of the effects of liquor. "He's got an edge on and I wouldn't pester him."

*on edge*

To be nervous, irritable.

*on the edge of one's seat*

Be apprehensive, in suspense. "The game between Duke and State kept me on the edge of my seat all the time."

*edge up*

To move up quietly and stealthily, to grow slowly. "I edged up behind that old rooster and, blam! I grabbed him, but all I got was a handful of tail feathers."

Like a man climbing a pole with an armful of *eels*.

*eeny, meeny*

A counting out rhyme.

*Eeny*, meeny, tipsy teeny,  
Apple jack and josephiny,  
Hotcher, potcher, dominocher,  
Howyuh pontus  
Tus in, tus out,  
Tus around the water spout.  
Have a peach, have a plum,  
Have a stick of chewing gum.  
O-u-t spells out  
On your way home!

Another counting out rhyme runs as follows:

*Eeny*, meeny, miny, moe  
Catch a nigger by his toe,  
If he hollers let him go,  
*Eeny*, meeny, miny, moe.  
O-u-t spells out  
So out you go.

Also another one popular in the Valley was:

*Eeny*, meeny, miny, min,  
Catch a nigger by his chin.  
If he hollers make him pay  
Fifty dollars every day.  
O-u-t spells out  
On your way home.

An *egg* before an eagle, a thought before a thing.

better an *egg* today than a hen tomorrow

As I was walking through the wheat  
I picked up something good to eat,  
Neither fish, flesh, fowl nor bone—  
I kept it till it walked alone.

(Riddle. An *egg*.)

*egg bag*

The sack in which hens are supposed to keep their developing eggs. When they quit laying, it used to be said in my neighborhood, "She's laid out her egg bag latter (litter)."

***egghead***

An impractical pedant, also a dumb cluck, a fool.

***eggnog***

A special Valley Christmas drink, usually made of eggs, sugar and cream, with liquor added.

In Harnett County when I was a child there was very little drinking among our folks, but when Christmas came, eggnog was popular and the older people, and the younger people, too, would indulge in it with some exhilarating little sense of sin because it had liquor in it.

***egg on***

To encourage, to incite to action. Same as aggr on. "He kept egging me on, and finally I had to fight."

***a bad egg***

A mean guy, a trouble-maker.

***nest egg***

Money put away for a rainy day or for some special purpose. "When that young fellow come a-courting, Miss Laura took out her nest egg and turned it slam-dash over to him."

***eggs***

Bombs. "Right over the middle of Dresden we let loose our whole nest of eggs — great God!"

He moves like he's walking on *eggs*.

The man who puts his *eggs* all in one basket better watch the basket.

Always have an odd number of *eggs* for a setting hen to hatch well.

Don't put all your *eggs* in one basket.

They're so trifling that they have to use their nest *eggs* when company comes.

***setting eggs***

Eggs that are chosen to be set under a hen for hatching.

Feeding chickens crushed *eggshells* will cause them to lay better.

***egg-skin***

The white skin inside an eggshell, if dried and taken as a powder, is food for sick stomach, indigestion, etc.

***ego***

The conscious part of a person. According to the Freudian mythology the ego is that organization or entity of the personality which has supervision

and control, more or less, of the id — the id which obeys the pleasure principle. The ego controls the id through the demands of the environment. This control Freud calls the reality principle. It is partly conscious and partly unconscious, he says. This ego goes to sleep at night, but it still senses and keeps a watchful, wakeful eye on the id. According to William James the ego refers to the self. I prefer James, and time will tell the fraud of Freud.

*Egypt*

Darkness, ignorance, lack of understanding. "I stay down in Egypt most of the time so far as the young folks go these days."

*Egyptian*

A folk misnomer for a gypsy.

*eh law! (eh Lawd)*

An interjection.

*Eight* hours of work, *eight* hours of sleep, and *eight* hours of play make a healthy man.

*eightball*

An unlucky situation. To be behind the eightball is to be in hard luck indeed.

*See where the cow kicked me on my elbow.*

This was a pantomime trick we children used to play. One player would crook his elbow with his fist up near his face and ask another child to look at his elbow and see where the cow kicked him. And when the child would lean forward to look for the wounded place, the first player's fist or hand would come smack down against the second child's face or head.

*elbow grease*

Stamina, energy, hard work. "All a chopping hoe needs is elbow grease."

*elbow room*

Space or freedom in which to accomplish a task.

*to go around your elbow to get to your mouth*

This means to take unnecessary trouble, of course, a wasteful procedure.

*out at the elbows*

To be in a penurious condition, beggarly, down and out.

*elder*

Alder.

*elderberry*

A shrub pretty common in the Valley, the history of which goes 'way, 'way back. Ancient Hippocrates (400 B.C.) praised its medicinal virtues, using its tea against colds and throat troubles. The herb doctors declared the berries



made a good medicine against nearly every physical ailment or discomfort, including the women's monthlies.

### *elebum*

Eleven.

### *electric belt*

A contraption for improving health generally and for increasing and restoring manly powers. Popular in the Valley years ago. The old Sears and Roebuck catalogues used to advertise these belts in glowing terms, saying that they were "the result of scientific study and experiment" . . . Wonderful in the "quick cure of all nervous and organic disorders arising from any causes, whether natural weakness, excesses, indiscretions," etc. . . "Worth all the drugs, chemicals, pills, tablets, washes, injections, and other remedies." "Perfect in relief for trouble of the sexual organs." Priced from \$4.00 to \$18.00.

### *electric chair*

The chair in which criminals were and are executed. Some years ago it was supplanted in many places by the gas chamber.

I used to have good acquaintance with the warden at the penitentiary in Raleigh when I was working hard for the abolition of capital punishment. He had pulled the switch on nearly a hundred men to send them into eternity, and he was frank in his opinions. "Killing these folks here don't do a speck of good in keeping down crime," he said.

When I asked him which he preferred, the electric chair or the gas chamber, he replied, "Oh, the gas chamber! It's just as quick" (I doubt this) "and when the juice is shot into a body, it often leaves the dead man in a cramp, and you have to break his leg or legs to get him into a coffin. But as I say, neither one don't help any in keeping numbers down. In fact, it adds its own murder to the list. Don't you think so, Mr. Green?"

"Yes, I do, for death adds to death."

### *element*

A satisfactory condition, surroundings or situation. "That Norman Matthews is just in his element when he gets a chance to sit down at a piano."

### *elements*

The sky, the weather.

### *Eleven Up*

A hand slapping game. Any number can play it. The players stack hands, palms down, one on top of the other, and often one palm is brought down on another with a fire-burning slap. The one on the bottom each time is pulled out and put on top until number eleven is reached. Number eleven is taken off. When all the hands except one have been taken off, the person

whose hand is left is asked, "Which will you choose, yes or no?" He makes his choice. Then he is asked three questions, and if he chose "yes," he must answer "yes." If he chose "no," he must say "no." Often hilarious embarrassment resulted. Say a boy and girl who are in love are present. The boy may be asked if he loves the girl. He may have to say no. "Would you like to marry her?" "No." and so on.

The game was sometimes called "Hands."

*at the eleventh hour*

At the latest possible moment.

*elf locks*

Knots in one's hair supposed to be made by the elves.

*ell and yard*

The three stars in the belt of the constellation Orion.

*ellum*

Elm. The bark of a slippery elm tree dried was used by spitball pitchers. When I was pitching sandlot ball in the Valley, I would buy the stuff at the drugstore in Angier to chew, and sometimes with the spittle just right and the motion just right, the ball would be sent toward the plate almost without turning. Then as it approached the plate it would dart downward and the batter usually missed it by a foot. But sometimes the slippery elm spittle would cause the ball to get away from me and a wild pitch would result.

*else's*

Another's, belonging to someone else. "Here's someone else's hat left behind."

*emblem charms*

These charms were usually worn on watch chains. The widespread use of wristwatches has pretty much put them out of style, although now and then they are worn in the coat lapel. When I was a boy, nearly every man you met wore an emblem to decorate his vest, denoting membership in some fraternal or social organization. Among the most common ones were Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Order of Red Men, and Sons of Veterans. Prices for these charms ranged from 35¢ to \$12.00.

*Emma*

A conjure ball. A little black hairy thing big as a dollar.

John Henry, the country quack doctor, said in a play I wrote, "Never try to see what's in that ball for the power would evaporate like the morning dew. A little packet for the men is called 'Emma' and them for the women is called 'Joe.' You folks look at me, how come I got money, dress so well, know so much, and walking the earth happy and a-smiling? My little

package. How come you folks all so tired, miserable, weak, hungry, quarrelly, fighty, ignorant? Because you got no little ball, no little packet. I can give somebody one. You? You? To start things off with, the regular price is two dollars — two dollars once, two dollars twice! Have one and receive light to heavenly truth. Hebbun, hebbun, everybody talking about hebbun ain't going there. O yes, step right up now, you men folks get your Emma, and you women folks get your Joe, and bring good luck and happiness to yourselves, each one and separate. Individual. Yes, ma'am. And yes, sir. Hallelujah!"

*Employment* brings enjoyment.

*empt*

To empty. We children picking cotton in the fields in Harnett County always used the word *empt*. We'd get our cotton sacks full and one would announce proudly, "I've got to go *empt*." And so he would go off with his bag to the spread-out cotton sheet where the cotton would be emptied in a pile for tying up and weighing when the sun went down.

*empty*

To defecate.

*empty* as a dream

*empty* as a drum

*empty* as a gourd

*empty* as air

*empty* as a sieve

An *empty* belly hears nobody.

An *empty* cart body rattles most.

It's hard for an *empty* bag to stand upright.

*end*

The buttocks.

The *end* is not justified by the means.

The *end* of mirth is heaviness.

In everything consider the *end*.

go off the deep *end*

Have a complete nervous breakdown, risk everything on a wildcat scheme. can't see farther than the *end* of your nose

*end for end*

Horizontal, contiguous. "Lay that lumber end for end."

*end over end*

Somersaulting through the air.

*come to the end of one's rope*

Come to a complete hindrance or stoppage, play one's last card, make a final and desperate effort, come to the end of one's patience, come down to one's deathbed.

*keep one's end up*

Bear one's responsibility, one's share of a job, to bear up under difficulty and disaster.

make both *ends* meet

Balance one's income with one's spending.

*at loose ends*

Uncertain which way to go, all undecided, scatterbrained. "Since he lost his sweetheart to that fellow over the river he's all at loose ends."

*enduring*

A measurement of time used for emphasis. "There he sat without saying a word the whole enduring time." Also during, continuing.

*endwise*

Upright. "Stand the scantlings up endwise."

*enemies*

Head lice.

If thine *enemy* hunger, feed him.

We have met the *enemy* and he is us.

*Engine, engine* number nine  
Running on the Chicago line.  
When she's polished she will shine.  
*Engine, engine* number nine.  
(A counting out rhyme.)

*English plate*

A plate entirely cleaned off by the eater. We had an English contributor to the *London Observer* staying with us, and he would always sop his plate shiny clean with his last morsel of bread and say, "I was brought up always to end my meal with an English plate."

*enjoy*

To have, to experience. "He's enjoying poor health." A catachrestic use of the word.

*Enough* is as good as a feast.

*Enough* of anything is *enough*.

Well *enough* is soon *enough*.

Let well *enough* alone.

*Enough's enough*.

*Epsom salts*

Next to calomel, the most popular laxative in the Valley.

*equalizer*

Pistol, switchblade knife, any implement of arms.

*erf* (oeuf)

The pronunciation of the French word by the doughboys in the First World War. We fellows on furlough sometimes would go around among the peasants and try to buy some "erfs." It was about as hard to get the peasants to understand what we wanted as it was for us to locate the eggs in the first place.

To *err* is human, to forgive divine.

*espen*

Aspen.

*by the eternal!*

An imprecation, a favorite with Andrew Jackson.

Can the *Ethiopian* change his skin or the leopard his spots?

*evangels*

The "authors" of the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

*evaporate*

To run away, to vanish, to go AWOL.

*even dollar*

Exactly a dollar. "I bought that there coon hound for an even dollar."

*evening*

The afternoon, the time between 12 noon and "good dark."

*Evening* brings the cows home.

*Even or Odd*

A guessing game. We used to play the game with grains of corn, but pennies or beans or any small object may be used as counters. One child will take a number in his hand and hold up his closed fist and call, "even or odd?" The other child in the game will make a guess. If he guesses correctly, he gets the grains or pennies in the challenger's hand. If he misses, then he must give the challenger a number of grains or pennies to equal the amount in the hand. And so it goes until one player has lost all of his tokens or counters. Much like Jack-in-the-Bush.

*even-steven*

The one equaling the other, a balance, share and share alike. "Let's get some ice cream and all go even-steven."

Coming *events* cast their shadows before them.

*ever*

Always, forever, used for emphasis as the best ever, the finest ever, the worst ever, etc.

*everage*

Average.

*ever how many (or how much)*

"It makes no difference ever how many come, we'll have plenty rations for all."

*everlasting*

The rabbit tobacco plant. Also an emphatic noun. "I'll knock the everlasting out of you."

*ever so much*

A limitless amount. "I love you ever so much."

*everywhere*

Everywhere.

*Every* tub must stand on its own bottom.

*every bit and grain*

An inclusive statement of every item, every consideration or point of view. "That Steve Lowry is every bit and grain as mean as his brother, Henry Berry."

*"Everybody Works but Father"*

A satirical song we children used to sing, often in reference to someone else's father — and we knew of one or two in the neighborhood which the song fitted — but never to our own who was hard-working, much to our pride

and bragging—

“Everybody works but father.  
He sits around all day  
Baking his feet to the fi-ah,  
Smoking his pipe of clay.  
Mother takes in washing,  
So does Sister Ann.  
Everybody works at our house.  
But my old man.”

*Everybody's business* is nobody's business.

*Every couple* is not a pair.

*Every man* must eat a peck of dirt before he dies.

*Every man Jack*

Everybody, used for emphasis, same as every mother's son.

*Everything* turns out best in the end.

*Everything* works for the good of those that love the Lord.

*Everything* works out for the best.

A place for *everything* and *everything* in its place.

*Every well-made person* owns  
Just two hundred and six bones.

*every whichaway*

In disarray, this way and that way, a condition of confusion.

*Every why* has a wherefore.

*Eve's darning needle*

Same as yucca.

*Evil* communications corrupt good manners.

*evil eye*

A person with an evil eye has an eye which can work curses upon a person it fixes in its glare. Conjure and voodoo doctors are supposed to be able to invoke the evil eye and so put a spell on a helpless person.

Whosoever shall *exalt* himself shall be abased.

He that shall humble himself shall be *exalted*.

A good *example* is the best sermon.

The *exception* proves the rule.

### *excursion*

A holiday trip usually on the train to some nearby town, indulged in mainly by country people. Excursions were very popular in early decades of this century.

Around Lillington where I lived an excursion to Durham or Raleigh was always a big occasion, and I remember one vividly. I wasn't a passenger on the train but I observed the happening at the little station where the train stopped — a tragic happening.

I had come to the neighboring town of Angier with my father on a bright day in spring to get a load of fertilizer for our farm. I stood by the little shack of a railroad station waiting along with several others, among them an old Confederate soldier leaning on his walking stick, for the train to put in its appearance. I have always liked to see trains. Soon the locomotive with its brass trimmings showed its round black moon of a face around the bend. It puffed and wheezed along toward us and finally drew in with a rusty squealing of its brakes. It was an old wood-burner, and the climb into town had been tough. The engineer piled out of the cab. He was grease-marked outside and full of spleen and frustration inside. He began to work on the old locomotive, squirting grease here and there into its aged joints. I looked down the track and spilling out of the Jim Crow car—there were only four in all, a white car, a Negro car, a freight car and a caboose—spilling out was a swarm of little Negro school girls all dressed in their pink and white and blue picnic garments and with ribbons in their hair. Also there was a sprinkling of young Negro boys ironed and pressed and scrubbed clean by their mamas for this great day. At the head of them was a tall yellow Negro man wearing gold-rimmed glasses and with a wide expanse of white stiff-starched shirt front and wing collar, and a big black bolster tie. The little children twittered and chirped in the sunny air, looking happily about them. They were on their way to Durham, North Carolina, on what was called in the parlance of those days a "skursion." The big yellow man was the teacher and he was taking the children on this jaunt as a wind-up for his year's school teaching. He came strolling forward toward us and toward the irate and working engineer. He felt good. He was expansive. The world was sitting to his hand.

"Good morning, gentlemen," he said graciously to us.

The old Confederate soldier blinked up at him, continued leaning on his stick and said nothing. I, a little boy, naturally said nothing. But I was already in my heart admiring this gracious, this genial, this successful and respectable representative of the Negro race.

"What time do the train get to Durhams, sir?" the Negro teacher asked of the engineer.



"None of your damned business," the engineer snapped back, still bent over one of the drivers with his oil can. Then he looked around. He straightened spasmodically up and glared at the colored man. The Negro already had taken a shocked and rebuffed step backward.

"Sorry, sir, sorry," he said, and he was beginning to bob his head up and down a bit, bending his body at the waist.

"Take off your hat," the engineer suddenly shouted. Off it came in the culprit's hand. The little children down at the end of the train began to see something was wrong, and in the blink of an eye they were huddling closer together as if some fearful threat were being felt in the air — and it was.

"Take off them specs too!" the engineer snarled as he stood up.

"But I ain't done nothing, white folks, ain't done a thing," said the colored man, and he backed away a couple of steps more.

"Don't white-folks me!" the engineer squealed. He flung the oil can behind him, snatched the heavy walking stick from under the old Confederate soldier's resting hand and quick as lightning struck the Negro teacher a terrific blow across the face.

A little babble of shrieks and moanings rose from the school children, and, like a gang of terrified goats, they bounded up the steps of the Jim Crow car and inside to safety. The old Confederate soldier had almost fallen on his face when his support was jerked away. He righted himself with spread-out legs as the engineer handed his splintered walking stick back to him. The old soldier resumed his resting on it without a word. I couldn't look at the dreadful stick. I couldn't look at the Negro teacher. I shivered as if some bitter freezing pall had overspread the world. A low whimpering sound came from the Negro. Then he spoke out simply, almost coldly, "Lord, white folks, you done ruint my shirt."

"All aboard!" yelled the engineer. He climbed hastily into his cab, pulled the whistle cord a couple of times. The Negro schoolteacher turned, still holding his big white handkerchief, now dyeing itself all over crimson, against his face.

The scene haunted me for years. And later when trying to do some work for the Negro people, I sat down and wrote a drama of a schoolteacher who tried desperately to help his people and failed. It wasn't a Confederate soldier's walking stick that laid my hero low, but something more up-to-date and final — a mob's shotgun. The schoolteacher of that spring morning long ago is dead and gone. A bad scar showed on his face as long as he lived, running from his forehead down to his chin. And there must have been a scar in his heart too. There is in mine still, and always will be.

A poor *excuse* is better than none.

*excuse-me-ma'am, thanky-ma'am*

A little dike or jump for turning water across a road, often called a bullhead.

as many *excuses* as a dog has fleas

*excusing*

Except. "We're all here, Mr. Green, ready to start to work, excusing Bozo, he's sick today."

*exle*

Axle.

*exom salts*

Epsom salts.

*expect*

To suppose, conclude, suspect.

*Experience* is the best teacher.

*Experience* keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other.

as *extinct* as a dodo

*extrasensory perception*

The perceiving or response to some object, event or even thought by a means other than through the senses. J.B. Rhine of Duke University adopted the term "extrasensory perception," and this has become popular. At his invitation I took his laboratory tests and came out with a score pretty much like that of a retarded child or moron.

Mr. Mac, my old friend the miller, and I once were talking about signs and omens and the like and the fact of coincidental happenings now and then. We both agreed that a coincidence could cause people to believe in miracles and such — clairvoyant insight, precognition, and the like.

"Take these experiments Rhine is doing up at Duke University about this extra sense people have got," he said. "I've been reading in the paper about it — about all that card-guessing stuff. It's but a game to play. There's nothing to it. They speak of what they call a variation from the average. Well, there's no such thing as the average or, if there is, it's rare as hen's teeth. It's just a theory they've worked out by mathematics. It's as hard to hit the average as it is to vary from it, yes, much harder, maybe. Say you throw up a quarter and let it fall a thousand times. According to their figuring, it ought to fall heads about five hundred times and tails five hundred. But let's see you make it come out that way. They just as well pick the fellow that fitted the average as having that psychic power as one who varies from it. Well, that's the way it goes, and you can't keep people from projecting with every sort of fool thing — that is, when they've got the time and money to do it. But it does seem like a waste, don't it? To think of putting up buildings and hiring teachers and sending young folks to school to mess

with that!"

"I think you're right, Mr. Mac," I said, "but still that's the only way to make progress, they say, by experimenting."

"Well, maybe so," he replied. "But it's a waste just the same — waste of something, I won't say brains. Now if these problems were learning and teaching computer work, or ploughing, or how to spread manure, there'd be some reason to it. Still, as Scrubblin' Archie McNeill used to say, it takes all kinds of ingredients to make haggis, and then you're not always sure you've got good haggis at that."

*eye for an eye* and a tooth for a tooth

The old Mosaic law of tit-for-tat.

*eye-opener*

An informing surprise, exceptional new knowledge. Also an early morning dram.

People with blue *eyes* are true; people with black are not.

*eyes* as big as saucers

*eyes* as blue as a gander's

*eyes* like an eagle

Grey *eyes*, greedy gut.

Black *eyes*, eat the world up.

(A teasing rhyme.)

*eyewash*

Nonsense, baloney.

# F

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## *face*

To answer an accuser. "Don't worry, I'm not afraid to face anybody."

Appearance, meaning. "That puts a different face on the matter."

To consider, to have a look at, study a fact, agree. "Some day they'll make a historical place out of that house, let's face it."

Don't cut off your nose to spite your *face*.

Her *face* is like the full moon.

## *straight face*

To remain calm or unperturbed in a harsh or troublesome situation. "There he sat with a straight face hearing the lawyers condemn him to death."

## *faddle*

Nonsense, almost the same as in the word fiddle-faddle.

## *faddy*

Full of fads and whims, frivolous.

## *fagged out*

Tired out, exhausted.

Three *failures* and a fire make a Scotchman rich.

*Faint* heart ne'er won fair lady.

## *fainty*

Languid, exhausted, out of breath.

## *fair*

To be honest, to tell the truth. "I'll be fair with you, I don't know what kind of rose bush that is."

*fair* as a bell

*fair* as your hand

*Fair* outside doesn't prove a fair inside.

All that's *fair* must fade.

It's always *fair* weather  
When good fellows get together.

*fair enough*

Said of an equitable trade or arrangement.

*fairies' table*

An edible mushroom.

*to fair off*

A clearing of the weather. "The day faired off for Easter, and we all had a glorious time."

*fair to middlin'*

In a so-so, intermediate condition. "How're you today?" "Oh, fair to middlin'."

*fairy tale*

A hard luck tale, a panhandler's plaint.

*Faith* builds a bridge across the gulf of death.

*Faith* dares, love bears.

*Faith* is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

I have kept the *faith*.

O ye of little *faith*

Thy *faith* hath saved thee.

We walk by *faith*, not by sight.

*faithful* as a dog

*faith healing*

The healing of disease, pain or hurt by the power of faith in the healing agency whether worldly or divine.

The man who helps in the yard and around the house told me the other day that he had finally been healed of his "arthritis," and that by television. (I had never known he had any arthritis until then.)

"Aw, go 'way, Rollo, you don't mean you really got healed," I said.

“Yes sir, Mr. Green, it worked. I feel like a new man right now. And it didn’t cost me a nickel, not a nickel. All I had to do was just do what the man on television, Mr. Roberts, said — look straight at him and believe in his power. And I done it, and him saying ‘You are being healed, healed.’ I could feel myself getting better. Yes sir, it’s a wonderful thing, and it didn’t cost me a nickel.”

I’ve had some experience with faith healers from the time I was a boy. When I was a student at Chapel Hill and was getting interested in collecting words and phrases and superstitions and folk practices — some of which I put into plays and stories, and some of which I stored away — I went several times down to the Holy Roller camp at Falcon, a settlement some distance below Dunn, on the way to Fayetteville.

At Falcon I was a witness to all kinds of hocus-pocus of healing, holy dancing, unknown tongue talkings, prayings and happy weepings. People would go up to the pulpit where the preachers stood or walked about smiling and seraphic, shouting, clapping their hands, and calling on the name of God with great unction and authority to heal them. And God would, or they said he did. I remember one woman who declared that her ribs had been broken and that through prayer and the laying on of hands she had been healed. Finally, one night I myself was moved to go up and try to get healed. When I was a boy of eight or ten I had had a long and serious attack of osteomyelitis and my right arm was somewhat stiff and pained me still at times. And so I was prepared with my rigmarole. I was also prepared with a pencil and a little hid-away notebook. While I was sitting up there at the platform, or standing waiting my turn, I could blindly write down some phrases that were being spieled there, some foolish, crazy, barbaric words used by these holy men of God. Finally, one of the preachers came over and wanted to know what my trouble was, and I told him about my arm, that it pained me a great deal, which was true. So he put his hand on my arm and sent up a keen prayer for me, and then asked me if I didn’t feel better, and I shook my head. He prayed some more and asked me if I didn’t feel better. I shook my head. Then the liar let out a great whoop and called on all to witness that this young man was feeling better, bless the Lord. “And no doubt from now on the power of God will be with him, amen!” he said.

And then there was Aunt Sudie Horton near Buie’s Creek. I used to go to her house as a little boy and play with Larry and Fred, her sons. We had lots of fun building little dirt furnaces and putting a tin smokestack in them and seeing the smoke come out, and wandering in the woods and making hawk callers and doing all sorts of wonderful things.

Aunt Sudie was famous in our neighborhood for being a sanctified woman and able to live without sin. She had no teeth, because as she told me one day and as she had told others, “I talked to the Lord, and the Lord

told me to have the old ones pulled out. So I had them pulled." My father who was more practical once said to her, "Sudie, why don't you get you some teeth?" And her reply was, "Billy, I talked to the Lord, and he told me that if he had wanted me to have another set of teeth, he would have growed me some."

Aunt Sudie was a wonderfully kind woman and as unshakable in her faith as she was kind. Sometimes when I would be walking home late at night from Buie's Creek Academy up the sandy road — maybe I had been staying late for a society meeting or some practice of singing — I'd come by old Pleasant Plains Church, and I could hear her inside praying. The first night I heard her I was frightened. But I stopped long enough to go to the door and peep in and, looking down the aisle, I saw Aunt Sudie kneeling on the floor in front of the pulpit with an old lantern sitting beside her, and she was praying aloud to God, praying for her friends and thanking the Almighty for all the good things he'd done for her. She heard my footstep or some movement at the door, and, without looking around or being frightened in the least, she called out, "Whoever it is, come on in and kneel with me, and we'll both pray to our Savior."

"It's me, Aunt Sudie — Paul," I finally quavered.

"Come on in, son, and kneel with me, come on in, bless you. And bless the Lord, bless the Lord," she sang out.

But already even then — I was about sixteen years old — I was beginning to look down on this kind of religion, and so I didn't go in and partake of all the blessings that she would have been able to give me.

Aunt Sudie was a great worker for foreign missions, too, in addition to her belief in faith healing, and she labored hard in milking the cow, making butter, saving eggs and selling them down at Buie's Creek so she could send her little gift to foreign missions, especially to the starving children in India who, according to *The Christian Herald*, were now reduced to gnawing bark off the trees in the forest.

For healing purposes, she kept in her house a supply of sanctified handkerchiefs. She would pass these around to neighbors who might be troubled with a pain or with some affliction such as a boil or inflammation or gripe or kidney colic, whatever it might be. And she would give instructions that the handkerchief should be laid on the sore spot and the suffering and pain would go away. These handkerchiefs cost her a quarter apiece. She got them from a Mr. Yokum in California. Then when the power had been used up, the handkerchiefs would be returned to Aunt Sudie, and she would send them back to "Brother Yokum," as she called him, with a quarter for each one, and he would endow them with more prayer and mystic power and return them to her, and she would distribute them again.

One cold morning in winter she went out to milk her cow — while Uncle Luke lay in bed and snoozed as usual. She happened to step on a garden

rake hidden in the snow, tripped and fell, and one of the prongs pierced her side. We all heard about it and soon learned that Aunt Sudie couldn't live. The neighbors gathered around her, a concourse of them, and she lay on the bed and endured her suffering with great patience and calm. She talked to all her friends in a consoling way, saying they should grieve not, she was happy that she was going home to glory. And as she was dying — I wasn't in the room, but I heard my father tell about it — she cried out she could hear the angels singing — welcoming her home to heaven! And so with a smile on her face, this sweet, patient and enduring little woman passed into eternity.

### *Falcon*

A small neighborhood some twelve miles north of Fayetteville, with several rough buildings and a central Holiness Church. Every summer it was and still is the custom to have revivals and pentecostal meetings there. I used to attend these meetings, not to get myself converted and filled with grace, but to look on and make notes — a most godless attitude and practice. But even so, I've never felt any need to repent.

One summer there was an especially great volume of talking in tongues. My cousin, who was planning to be a preacher, said Miz Rebecca Parrish, under the power of the Holy Spirit, spoke a whole splurge of Chinese talk. To my questioning look — I didn't have the heart to speak out my doubts in words — he answered he was sure it was Chinese, for it "was the most outlandish language I ever heard." Later Miz Rebecca said it was Chinese and no doubt about it. She had asked the Lord and he had assured her "that's what it was."

I have seen in the series of stable-like pews or rooms there young boys and girls, men and women, too, lying side by side on the sawdust-covered floor in a state of catalepsy or hypnosis from the power of their religious seizures in the church. The rhythmic poundings and stompings, the beating of clapping hands, the singing and hallelujahing of the preachers and congregation had finally proved too much for an emotional searcher and he (or she) had fallen to the floor in a seizure. Then he was borne out and placed on the sawdust floor by cooler-headed ones until he came back to his right mind.

My cousin who was to be a preacher (he fell from grace later because of a dark-eyed girl and turned to farming) often had these seizures — after great bouts of shouting and holy dancing. He told me more than once that after these he always felt "so good" in his soul.

### *fall*

To commit sin, to fall from grace. "Old King David saw Bathsheba taking a bath in a tub, and, brother, that's when he fell and fell hard."



*fall by the wayside*

To fail.

*falling axe*

An axe for cutting trees down as contrasted with a hewing axe, in the old days used to hew logs for cabins.

*falling picture*

A picture suddenly falling from the wall means bad luck to someone in the house.

*falling star*

When you see a falling star, make a wish and it will come true.

A *falling star* is a soul of a person dying.

*falling weather*

Rain, snow or sleet. "The almanac says there'll be falling weather around the first, and so I'm fixing up things against that."

*fall in with*

To agree with.

*fall off*

To lose weight, to lose flesh. "Lord, you ought to see him — he's fell off the most."

*fall off the wagon*

To start drinking again after an abstemious spell, to go back to alcohol.

*fall of man*

The folk belief that Adam and Eve were sinless in the Garden of Eden till Eve ate of the forbidden apple and persuaded Adam to eat too. This disobedience caused God to drive them out of the Garden and condemn them to live by the sweat of the brow. This sinful condition continued for hundreds and hundreds of years. And the children of Adam and Eve multiplied in the earth. After most of them were drowned in a flood which the divine father sent to punish them for their evil-doings, the struggle began again, and once more they multiplied on the earth and waxed in sin. This time a strange plan was hit upon by the maker of heaven and earth. He would send his only son down to the world and through him produce a way of salvation for man. It is easy to imagine dialogue for this plan, since the father knew what was to come just as he knew all that had happened in the past. The son might say —

"Papa, you say that man is deep in sin in yonder world and we must save him."

"So we must, my son," says the father.

“But if I go down there, Papa, they will nail me to a tree and kill me. I already see that. Won’t that mean they commit more sin — be more sinful than they are now?”

“But it is my plan,” answers the father.

“And what you plan has to be,” says the son, “I know that.”

“It has to be,” says the father. “I see what is to be, and what is to be must be or else—”

And I can imagine the father for a moment communes with himself. Then he goes on and tells his son the plan of salvation, on to his final death on the cross. The Holy Ghost hears all this, no doubt in silence, except when the father says that his son will be sent into the world as a body conceived by the Holy Ghost in a virgin named Mary. I would think that a question would be raised by the Ghost here.

I once in a play tried to explain this plan of salvation to an American Indian chief. He could never understand it, even when I showed that Jesus in his love laid down his life for us and in that example of sacrifice and love showed us the way to salvation. In his name then, I said, we should put away hate and violence. Love is the only answer, I said. He showed us that.

But Red Cloud could not understand.

*fall on one’s face*

To fail, to come a cropper, to make a foolish mistake.

*fall sawyers*

Cicadas, same as June bugs. “I can always sleep when the fall sawyers start working.”

*fall through*

To fail, not to succeed.

*false alarm*

A phony, a deceiver. Also, to have signs of pregnancy and then learn that they are not true — which reminds me of a little story going the rounds about a conversation of a young woman with a doctor. She went to him, saying she didn’t know whether her pains were a false alarm or not. He examined her, and then he said, “I have good news for you, Mrs. Brown.”

“Miss Brown,” she corrected.

“I have bad news for you, Miss Brown,” the doctor continued. “The alarm was not false.”

*false face*

A dough face, a mask or an extremely ugly person.

*false-faced*

Hypocritical, crooked.

*falsies*

Inserts for bras used to make women look as if they have fuller breasts than they really have.

*fambly*

Family.

*Familiarity* breeds contempt.

*familious*

Familiar in an offensive way.

*in the family way*

To be pregnant. "Miss Lucy Avez is in the family way, and everybody knows that new Holy Roller preacher done it."

After a *famine* in the stall  
Comes a *famine* in the hall.

*famous*

Of heavy growth, luxuriant, thick. "Them's famous oats you got there, Mr. Green."

*fancy*

A sweetheart.

*fancy Dan*

A dude, a foppish fellow.

*fancy piece*

A sweet-doing woman. Also a joyous copulation.

*fandangle*

A fantastic or extravagant ornament. "That old fortune-telling woman had them brass fandangles hanging down from her ears, and when she shook her head you could hear 'em rattle."

*David Fanning*

The Tory scourge of the Valley in the Revolutionary War. In a foray he captured Governor Burke and marched him to Wilmington as a prisoner. After the war Fanning fled to Canada where his career was a checkered, even disgraceful, one.

*fan the breeze (the wind)*

To run fast. "When old man Sam Johnson got after that feller for messing up his girl, that guy fanned the breeze going away from there."

*far*

Distance. "To the crossroads is all the far I'm going with you."

Fire. This pronunciation used to be common in the Valley but with more education it is rapidly, like other folk speech, passing away. I heard recently of an uneducated fellow who took part in a local Christmas pageant at his church. He portrayed one of the wise men who came to see the baby Jesus, as the Scriptures tell. He showed up for the performance dressed like a fireman — helmet, red suit, and all. When asked why such a costume, he said, "Just the way it says in the Bible — the wise men came from afar."

*Far* from the eyes, *far* from the heart.

*fardest*

Farthest.

*to a fare-you-well*

Completely, thoroughly.

### *The Farmer in the Dell*

A game for small children. This is a ring game in which one child is selected to be the "farmer." The others march around him, singing. And as each stanza is sung, a child is chosen representing the one named. Sometimes the children make up their own words and cause great hilarity in naming the different ones to be chosen and brought inside the ring. The last one chosen becomes the next "farmer." The game down in Harnett County that we played went as follows—

"The farmer in the dell,  
The farmer in the dell,  
Hi-oh the dairy-oh,  
The farmer in the dell."

And then follows a series of stanzas in which the lyrics are acted out by choosing:

"The farmer takes a wife—  
The wife takes a child—  
The child takes a nurse—  
The nurse takes a dog—  
The dog takes a bone—  
The bone stands alone."

And now the bone becomes the "farmer," and the game continues.

### *Farmyard Charms*

A children's game. This is a sort of practical joke game. A leader assigns each player the name of the farm animal whose voice he's supposed to imitate. All are to crow, to whinny, to moo or whatever it is, at a given signal. However, the leader has secretly instructed all but one of the players to remain

silent and then, when the signal is given, this one player brays out while the others are silent, and his embarrassment is equaled only by the fun of the others.

*far side*

The right side.

*fart*

To break wind.

*fart around*

To trifle, to play about.

no more use than a *fart in a whirlwind*

No use at all.

I could go *farther* and fare worse.

*fast*

Loose, a woman who is active sexually with men.

as *fast* as greased lightning

as *fast* as lightning

*fast mare*

A fast woman.

*fat*

In playing marbles, if the shooting player's taw stopped in the ring, it was "fat," and he had to stop playing until the next game. He was out of the game for the time being.

*fat* as a butterball

*fat* as a hog

*fat* as a pig

You must take the *fat* with the lean.

*dry up the fat*

To render chunks of hog fat in a pot to make lard. This was one of the important parts of the hog-killing ritual when I was a boy.

*"The Fatal Wedding"*

The first of Gussie Davis's heart-throbbing lachrymose songs, the second being "In the Baggage Coach Ahead" [q.v.]. This once pullman car porter's rise to fame is an inspiring story. Against all difficulties of poverty, race prejudice and denied opportunity he beat his way on. I haven't been able to find out where he is buried. If there isn't a monument in stone to him

somewhere, there should be. But at least he has a monument in his songs that will last like stone.

The words to "The Fatal Wedding" were written by one W.H. Windom who, so far as I know, was never heard of again. Mother sang this song to us children. We learned it by heart and shed some tears like her as we sang it in our own way — and often with a word changed here and there—

"The wedding bells were ringing on a  
moonlit winter's night,  
The church was decorated, all within  
was gay and bright.  
A mother with her baby came and saw  
these lights aglow,  
And thought of how these same bells chimed  
for her three years ago!

" 'I'd like to be admitted, sir,' she told the  
sexton old,  
'Just for the sake of baby, sir, to protect  
him from the cold.'  
He told her that the wedding was but for  
the rich and grand,  
And with the eager watching crowd outside  
she'd have to stand.

"Once more she begged the sexton old  
to let her step inside.  
'For baby's sake you may come in,' the  
gray-haired man replied.  
'If anyone knows reason why this couple  
should not wed,  
Speak now, or else forever hold your peace,'  
the preacher said.

" 'I must object,' the woman cried, in a voice so  
meek and mild.  
'The bridegroom is my husband, sir, and this  
is our little child.'  
'What proof have you?' the preacher said. 'My  
baby, sir,' she cried,  
She raised the babe, then knelt to pray—  
the little one had died.

"The parents of the bride then took the outcast  
by the arm,

They said, 'We'll care for you through life, you  
saved our child from harm.'

The parents, bride and outcast wife in a  
carriage drove away.

The bridegroom died by his own hand before  
the break of day.

"No wedding feast was spread that night, two  
graves were made next day,

In one the little baby, in the other its  
father lay.

This story often has been told by firesides  
warm and bright,

Of bridegroom, bride, the outcast wife and  
a fatal wedding night.

"While the wedding bells were ringing,  
While the bride and groom were there,  
Marching up the aisle together  
While the organ pealed an air,  
Telling tales of fond affection,  
Vowing never more to part—  
Just another fatal wedding  
Just another broken heart."

### *fat and sassy*

In happy circumstance.

### *fat-ass*

A broad-bottomed person.

### *fatback*

A poor type of hog bacon, usually all fat, but especially good for cooking with beans, collards, and various greens to give them the proper flavor.

Near our home lived Nathan Gibbs, a tenant farmer, a very industrious fellow, who worked hard and was for a rarity ambitious and wanted his children to have an education. Over the years he was able to accumulate enough to buy a small farm of his own. But unfortunately for his reputation he lived in a neighborhood where everybody except himself was a Democrat. He was a Republican and a staunch one at that, and accordingly was much and sharply gossiped about. And, too, I'm sure some of the disfavor in which he was held was due to the fact that he was more energetic than most people and was sharp too in his dealings — not dishonest, say, but sharp and a bit stingy.

I used to hear him brag that there never had been a butcher knife in

his house sharp enough to cut a ham. After killing his hogs, he always salted down the hams, to be put on sale later. And he fed his family, and the preachers too when and if they came, on fatback, so it was said.

It was told — mainly as fun criticism — that Nathan would hang a ham up in the window, put a pan of water on the floor and let the sunlight shine on the ham and cast its shadow into the water, then later he would feed it to his kids for ham soup. It was also told of him that he would often hire his children to go to bed without supper by giving them a nickel apiece and during the night he would steal the money out of their pockets and then the next morning whip them for losing it.

Such were the stories the neighbors out of their loving-kindness told about this most estimable man. He was my friend for many years. I admired him very much, for he raised a fine family of children, gave every one of them a college education, though his learning was of the poorest kind, and died rather well-to-do.

And all these bad stories about him were told, I'm sure, mainly because he was a Republican and because, for instance, he would never subscribe to *The News and Observer* newspaper, the Democratic Bible in the Valley, but always threw off on it with scorn for what he considered its narrowness of political thinking and its exaggerated devotion to rape cases, calling it always, with a finger to his nose, "The Nuisance and Disturber."

### *fat chance*

Little chance at all. "Fat chance you've got of being promoted, young man."

like *father*, like son

### *Father Is Dead and Laid In His Grave*

A children's singing game. What fun we used to have playing this on Sunday afternoons up at Uncle Tom's, or at our house or up at Mr. Harmon's — Laura Green, Lula Green, Josephine Harmon, Stuart Harmon, Gordon Long, Hugh Green, Mary Green, Lena Turlington and myself — most of these merry voices and lightsome feet long silent and nerveless in the grave. I can still see their dancing luminous forms, I can still hear the merry laughter there among the old oak trees as we sang and marched about and acted out what we sang—

"Father is dead and laid in his grave,  
Laid in his grave, laid in his grave.  
Father is dead and laid in his grave—  
Oh, oh, oh!

"There grew a green apple tree over his head,  
Over his head, over his head,  
There grew a green apple tree over his head,



Oh, oh, oh!

“The apples were ripe and ready to fall,  
Ready to fall, ready to fall,  
The apples were ripe and ready to fall,  
Oh, oh, oh!”

On the last “oh,” the marchers suddenly stop. The child nearest Father's head becomes the Old Woman of the next stanza and steps into the ring, being watchful not to get too near the recumbent Father. Then she begins the pantomime of picking up apples and putting them in her gathered-up apron, real or not. The song has gone on.

“There came an old woman and gathered them all,  
Gathered them all, gathered them all,  
There came an old woman and gathered them all.  
Oh, oh, oh!

“Father rose up and gave her a kick,  
Gave her a kick, gave her a kick,  
Father rose up and gave her a kick.  
Oh, oh, oh!”

On the last “oh,” Father springs up and aims a kick at the Old Woman. If he misses, he has to lie down again, and the game goes on as before. If he hits the Old Woman, the ring opens and she goes hobbling off for a distance to the accompaniment of the derisive singing—

“Then the old woman went hippity-hop,  
Hippity-hop, hippity-hop.  
Then the old woman when hippity-hop.  
Oh, oh, oh!”

She now returns and lies down as the Father — all to much merriment — and the one who was the Father joins the ring. Since this game is a sort of theatre of the imagination, sex makes no difference. A boy is easily the Old Woman, and a girl the dead Father.

Our *fathers* which were wondrous wise  
Did wet their throats before their eyes.

### *fat in the fire*

The devil to pay, an explosive situation. “When he accused that girl of leading his boy astray, the fat was in the fire.”

A *fat kitchen* makes a lean will.

*fat lightwood* (often pronounced lighter'd)

The rich resinous pine wood. We used to burn this with great delight, pushing it in big splintered sticks under the green oak wood, and before long we had a merry fire going. Lightwood has pretty much disappeared from the Valley. Once in a while you can find a stump and sometimes deep in the woods a dead lightwood tree. We used to use lightwood splinters set on fire for all sorts of illumination. We would use them at night in marching along serenading if we didn't have a lantern handy, also in bird blinding. Great splintered pieces of fat pine were used in tar making.

*fat meat*

Fat meat applied to a wound will take out poison. Also good to bring a rising (a boil) to a head and for healing sores.

*fat part*

A good part in a play.

*fattening hogs*

In the fall a pen usually was made of rails, and the hogs chosen to be slaughtered were put in the pen and fed heavily on corn and mash and slops to make them gain weight. And then on some cold day in mid-winter the farmer would be up before daylight, having a great fire going around his pots and the water being heated. He and some of his neighbors would make their way to the hog pen and there either brain the hogs with an axe or shoot them with a .22 rifle between the eyes.

I happened to get a rifle when I was about twelve years old, and I became the hog executioner in the neighborhood. When I thought of the awful crushing thud of the axe against the hog's forehead, I considered my method of killing much more humane. Later on I rebelled at the whole thing, got rid of my rifle and stayed away from all hog killings. And as the years have gone on, I've become more and more "chicken-hearted" so that now I find myself catching a wasp or a bee inside the house and carrying it tenderly in my handkerchief to the front door and letting it go free. And I keep planning to quit eating meat. I have not yet got so tender-hearted that I'd do as I used to see some of the monks in Thailand do — take indoor mosquitoes gently in their cupped hands and carry them to the front door and liberate them. But if I live a few more years, maybe I'll get as soft-hearted and as foolish as that.

*fatten up*

To grow or to stouten, or to fleshen up. I met a friend of mine on my first return from Hollywood, and she took me by the hand and looked in my eyes and said, "I'll declare, Paul, you've fattened up out there in Hollywood the most."

A *fault* confessed is half redressed.

His only *fault* is he has no *fault*.

There's none without a *fault*.

However blind a man may be  
Another's *faults* he's sure to see.

He has had food who feeds on another's *faults*.

*Faults* are thick where love is thin.

Forget others' *faults* by remembering your own.

### *favor*

To ease up on, to treat amiably or gently. "Is your leg sore? You seem to be favoring it."

To resemble, to be like another. "Sho', you's your Uncle Bob's kinfolds. I see the favor now."

### *favor* *avored*

Referring to one's features. "She's a hard-favored woman."

### *fawk*

Fork.

*Fear* a man who blows both hot and cold.

*Fear* God and keep his commandments.

### *fearder*

More afraid. "Old Goliath was fearder of little David than anybody when he seen that sling with the rock in it."

### *feast or famine*

Excess in either direction, either plenty or want.

### *feasts*

Three feasts are due to every man — the feast of baptism, the feast of marriage, and the feast of death.

### *feather in one's cap*

An honor, a prideful accomplishment.

### *feather one's nest*

To get rich, to look after number one. "I'll tell you what I think — I think Bobby Kennedy is always feathering his own nest or the nest of the Kennedys."

*in full feather*

Riding high, in full swing, exuberant with expectancy.

*white feather*

Cowardice.

*feathers rubbed the wrong way*

Irritated, made angry.

*Fine feathers* don't make the bird.

*gathering goats' feathers*

Dawdling about, sharpening pencils, cleaning up one's desk, trying to get ready to sit down and write — a favorite pastime of harried authors. "As soon as I quit gathering goats' feathers I reckon I'll be able to start on my book."

*to get one's feathers up*

To be angry, ready to fight.

*make the feathers fly*

Work like a whirlwind, fight like a wildcat.

*Feed* much to expect much.

*off one's feed*

To be sickly, puny, ailing, to have no appetite.

*put on the feedbag*

To go to the table to eat a meal.

*feeding time*

The time to feed the farm animals, usually has reference to the ending of the day.

*feed shucks to a goose*

Attempt something foolish, irrational, something obviously silly and unworkable.

Back in the old days in the Valley, the Irishman was the subject of many a good anecdote and joke. In the 1840's when the great effort to canalize the Cape Fear River was made, many laborers were brought in from a distance, especially Italian and Irish ones. Why the Italian didn't become the butt of fun and the source of joking also I don't know. Anyway, I was raised on the stories of funny Irishmen, and when there were two of the characters they were always named "Pat" and "Mike." If only one of them, he was usually called "Pat."

For instance, an Irishman showed up at a farmer's house there in the Valley one day and wanted a job, they said. The farmer asked if he could

split rails.

"Faith and me Christ, surely I can," said Pat.

The farmer told him to take the ax and maul and wedge and go down into the swamp and choose the nice straight trees, cut them down into ten-foot lengths and split away. Well, that evening when Pat returned to get his supper, the farmer asked him how many rails he had split.

"Faith and me Christ," said Pat, "when I get the one I'm working on and two more I'll have three."

"Lord God," said the farmer to his wife, "he's been trying to split them old sweet gums, I know, and God A'mighty's lightning can't do that."

"Well," he said to Pat, "maybe you're better at other things, so go out there and feed the geese for me." So Pat went out to feed the geese. When he came back, the farmer said, "Did you feed the geese?"

"Yes, sor, I did," said Pat.

"What did you feed 'em?" asked the farmer.

"Faith and me Christ, I give 'em an armful of shucks."

"Did they eat them?" said the farmer.

"No, sor, but they was talking about it when I left," said Pat.

### *Feed the Crow*

A child's game. The one who is going to show the other how to feed the crow crosses his two first fingers over the first two of his other hand, leaving an opening, and then he recites the following little verse:

"Put your finger in the crow's nest.  
The crow's not at home.  
The crow's at the back door  
Picking on a bone."

And if the second child is induced to insert his finger, then it is nipped by the nail of the thumb of the first child. This game is the same as "Feed the Crab" or "The Crab's Nest."

### *feed the fishes*

To be seasick, to hang vomiting over the ship's railing.

### *feed trough*

The place where one gets paid off. Same as pie counter.

"Everybody flocks to the feed trough in Washington. Let a little bit of wind blow and it's called a hurricane and a disaster area, and off go the politicians to Washington to get money for the farmers. And all the time everybody's cussing about high taxes and Uncle Sam's messing in everybody's business."

*Feed your mule* well if you expect a good crop.

*fee larks*

Field larks.

*feel for Jesus*

It was told of a Holy Roller meeting that during the high cuttings-up and holy dancing and talking in unknown tongues the lights went out and the deacons and some of the young ones started to feel for Jesus, that is put probing hands up the skirts of the females. And one deacon was heard to shout out in the terms of the old timey hymn, "Lord, I've found it!"

Another vulgar story I heard as a boy was about a Methodist camp meeting. A farmer was anxious to attend this meeting, and he didn't want his wife to go because she would give the glad eye to the young men. So, as the story went, when he left, being afraid that some of the neighbors left behind would bother his wife, he fitted her with a pair of tin drawers. Well, it happened that two Methodist preachers on their way to the convention or to the gathering passed the farmer's house to get a drink of water and met up with the young woman. And it was told that, expecting such emergencies, they both had come armed with can openers. They started feeling for Jesus with the can openers. And I, a little boy around a sawmill hearing these things, began wondering very early about human nature and its sacred beliefs.

*feeling hand disease*

A roving hand of a lecher. "At the party last night Bill got to messing with Sarah over in the corner, and she called out for all of us to hear, 'Say, folks, old Bill here has got the feeling hand disease,' and I reckon that stopped him all right."

Where *feelings* are high common sense is low.

*feel in one's bones*

To have a premonition, a hunch.

*feel like*

To be inclined to, to look favorably upon. "I feel like standing up and shouting every time I hear Billy Graham preach," said the old lady as she put out her cigarette.

*feel* like a boiled lobster (especially after being in the sun)

*feel* like a boiled owl

*feel* like a stewed owl

*feel like the devil*

To be less than well, or to be depressed.

*feel one's oats*

To be full of pride, high spirits.

*feel under the table*

To be in low spirits, sickly.

Better to die on your *feet* than live on your knees.

Don't let the *feet* outrun the shoes.

*feet foremost*

Dead, a corpse. It was a custom to carry a corpse feet foremost in the old days. "It won't be long before I'll be carried out through that door, feet foremost to the grave."

*feet in the trough*

Hearty eating.

*felloe*

The circular rim of a wheel in which the spokes were inserted.

*fellow*

The mate to, one of a pair. "Have you seen the fellow to this sock?"

*bone felon*

An inflammation of the finger, ending often in the fingernail coming off.

*fence rail*

In the old days in the Valley farmers fenced their farms in to protect them from the cattle and hogs which were let run loose in the forest where they could feed on the reed thickets and acorns. These rails were usually split from ten-foot lengths of longleaf pine logs and the fences were built up to stand about ten rails high. They were called snake fences, sometimes worm fences, because of their shape. And keeping them mended, for they were always rotting down, especially the bottom rail, was a chore I despised as a boy and young man, next to digging potatoes.

Old Sid Oates, like many another farmer, got up in arms when the no-stock law was passed by the state, which said that from now on the situation was to be reversed — where before the farms were fenced in and the cattle left free, now the cattle must be fenced in and the farms left free.

"Why, my God A'mighty!" said Sid, "The gover'mint's gone slam crazy." And he got out his shotgun and threatened to shoot anybody that tried to keep his cattle from running wild. "My hogs and cows have been free to go where they wanted, so did my daddy's, so did my gran'daddy's and beyond him to the founding of this country. Yessir. A man's got his rights and liberties g'arnteed by the Constitution and now they're trying to take 'em away from him. Why, our forefathers fou't at Lexington for

just that, and I'm ready to fight now."

So did old Sid and others like him in the Valley talk and threaten. But to no avail, and the juggernaut of progress rolled on over them.

*'fess up*

Confess, speak out.

*fetching*

Attractive.

*fever blister*

Shows one has been telling lies. Also if a girl, she has been kissing a boy.

*fever stick*

A doctor's thermometer.

*few and far between*

Scattered, seldom. "Kind words from that woman are few and far between."

*f.h.b.*

A sort of secret code between the members of a family, for family to hold back on certain items of company food until the guests were satisfied.

*fibber*

A liar.

*fibs*

An expression in a game of marbles, same as five. If a player happened to knock out five dinahs at once and shouted "fibs" before one of the other players shouted "venture fibs," then he could keep all five of the dinahs. But if he failed to be ahead of another player in the calling out, then he had to put the dinahs back into the ring and the game went on as before.

*fice*

A feisty little dog.

*fiddle about*

To waste time, to trifle around.

*fiddle-faddle*

Trifling ways, nonsense.

*second fiddle*

A lesser or supporting position.

*fiddling tunes*

For decades "fiddlers conventions" have been popular in the Valley. The winner's first prize was usually a five- or ten-dollar gold piece. After we went off the gold standard, paper money had to do. Though not pretty and



shiny, it is still money. Among the hundreds of tunes popular at these contests and parties were: *Arkansas Traveler*; *Billy in the Lowgrounds*; *Booger Man*; *Brother Easom Got the Coon and Gone On*; *Bucking Mule*; *Buffalo Gals*; *Cackling Hen*; *Casey Jones*; *Catfish and Little Minnow*; *Cindy*; *Cumberland Gap*; *Dancing Gal*; *The Devil Among the Tailors*; *Drunken Sailor*; *Fisher's Hornpipe*; *The Girl I Left Behind Me*; *Golden Joy*; *Gray Eagle*; *Green River*; *Jeff Davis's March*; *John Paul Jones*; *Julie Ann Johnson*; *Katie Hall*; *Leather Britches*; *Listen to the Mockingbird*; *Little Brown Jug*; *McCuller's Dream*; *Mississippi Sawyer*; *Old Bow Back*; *Old Joe Clark*; *Old Zip Coon*; *Peek-a-Boo*; *Pocahontas*; *Polly Put the Kettle On*; *Pop Goes the Weasel*; *The Preacher and the Bear*; *Raise a Ruckus Tonight*; *Redwing*; *Root Hog or Die*; *Run, Nigger, Run*; *Rye Straw*; *Sally Ann*; *Sally Goodin*; *Sally With Her Shoes Run Down*; *Shortening Bread*; *Skip to My Lou*; *Sourwood Mountain*; *Sugar in My Coffee*; *Sugar in My Toddy*; *Sweet Betsy from Pike*; *Turkey Buzzard*; *Turkey in the Straw*; *The Wabash Cannonball*; *Walking in the Parlor*; *Weevily Wheat*; *Who Will Shoe My Purty Little Foot*. And on and on.

### *field*

There are only three things a field needs — good seed, good weather and good elbow grease.

### *fieldhand*

A worker in the fields as contrasted with a house servant. A house servant would never be called a househand, nor would a fieldhand ever be called a field servant.

as *fierce* as a lion

### *fiery furnace*

The bad place, torment, hell in the hereafter, also a crisis or hard trial.

Not worth a *fig* (*trifle*).

### *A fig to you!*

Same as nuts to you.

### *fighting cock*

A young braggart and bully.

### *fighting mad*

In a rage, ready to take on all comers.

### *fight like the devil*

With determination.

He that *fight*s and runs away  
Will live to *fight* another day.

*filliloo bird*

A mythical bird that sticks its head in the sand and whistles through its rectum. Applied to a foolish person.

*fill the bill*

To suit, to be satisfactory.

*filly*

A lively, even wanton young woman.

*filth*

A heavy growth of grass or vines among corn, cotton or tobacco — weeds, trash, straw. My father used to use that word all the time when his crops were so overrun. “We’ve got to get down there, boys, and clean out that filth.”

*filthy lucre*

A jocular term for money.

*find*

Give birth to. “The old sow has found pigs down in the pasture.”

*Finders*, keepers;

Losers, weepers.

as *fine* as frog’s hair

as *fine* as lace

as *fine* as silk

*one of these fine days*

Sometime, an uncertain occasion in the future, same as one of these fair days.

*Fine feathers* don’t make the bird.

*Finery* is foolery.

*fine voice*

High-pitched voice. “You sing the fine part, Gordon, and let Ernest do the gross.”

*Fine words* butter no parsnips.

One *finger* won’t catch fleas.

Don’t cut off a *finger* to spite the thumb.

*finger game rhymes*

The fingers are interlocked and then turned inward, and the person playing the game, usually with little children, speaks the following rhyme:

“Here’s the church,  
Here’s the steeple,  
Open the door  
Here are the people.”

On “Here’s the steeple” the forefingers are stuck upward for the steeple. On “Open the door” the closed fingers are turned upward. It is very much the same as another finger game with the following verse—

“That’s the lady’s forks and knives,  
And that’s the lady’s table,  
And that’s the lady’s looking glass,  
And that’s the baby’s cradle.”

Cutting a baby’s *fingernails* will cause it to steal.

*hang on by one’s fingernails*

To be able just to carry on, to be in a most precarious situation.

*finger of scorn*

A term of contempt.

*finger stall*

A finger-shaped covering of cloth, sometimes of leather, to protect a hurt finger.

*fingers*

If two people say the same thing at the same time, they should hook each other’s little finger and make a wish.

Anyone who can make the first and fourth fingers touch over the backs of the others may marry anyone he chooses.

*fingers all thumbs*

To be awkward, stumbly, inept.

Keep your *fingers* out of holes.

*Fingers* were made before forks.

*finish*

The end, death. “When a man comes down to the finish, he better have some faith in God.”

*fight to the finish*

“When the forts of folly fall,  
Find my body by the wall.”  
Matthew Arnold

*finished*

Bankrupt, undone.

*fire*

High temper, spirit, anger. "I tell you you better be careful how you handle old Cindy, she's full of fire."

The electric chair. "Yeah, put me in that fire and burn me on down, but I can take it, yeah man, I can take it."

*Fire* a gun or cannon to bring a drowned body to the surface.

*Fire* may be talked out of a burn if one recites certain verses from the Bible.

*Fire* often sleeps in the ashes.

Don't pour oil on the *fire*.

out of the frying pan into the *fire*

spreads like *fire*

works like fighting *fire*

You can hide the *fire*, but what about the smoke?

like a *fire* in high grass

How great a matter a little *fire* kindleth.

Heap coals of *fire* upon his head.

*a fire at one end and a fool at the other*

A cigarette smoker.

*fireback*

The back part of a fireplace made of good brick or rock or, in some places where one was able to afford it, of iron plate.

I remember once that my father and Clinton McNeil, a local fieldhand and semi-mason worker, went down toward the Cape Fear River and got some rocks, came back and put in a fireback. Later on that winter night we children were all sitting with our father and mother around the glowing fire and thinking how fine this piece of handiwork was. Suddenly there was a terrific explosion and the whole fireback blew out at us, and a piece of rock hit my father on the side of the head, but didn't hurt him too much. Later we figured out that the soft rock had some dampness inside it and this, in the heating, turned into steam, and therefore the explosion. After that, my father was very sure that he got the hardest kind of rock for our fireback.

*fire board*

The mantel piece.

*fire dogs*

Andirons.

*all-fired*

A term used for emphasis. "He's all-fired faithful to the Ku Klux Klan."

*fire-eater*

An excitable, high-tempered person.

*fire-fishing*

The spearing or gigging of fish by the light of burning lightwood splinters.

*fire in the hole!*

A cry given out by a dynamiter to warn all the nearby people that the fuse was lighted and to get to a safe place before the explosion occurred.

*like a house afire*

Swiftly, frantically, wildly, furiously. "Cleveland Jones can pull fodder like a house afire."

*fire stick*

The poker. In the old days for lack of iron or steel the farmers would use a hickory or white oak stick.

*fire tongs*

The grapplers to lift coals or fire chunks about.

*fire up*

To burn with a drought or sometimes with too much rain. "My corn's all fired up from the drought, and I don't expect to make much this year."

To get angry easily.

as *firm* as Gibraltar (a rock)

*The first* the worst,

The second the same.

The last the best

Of all the game.

(A recitation and counting-out rhyme.)

*won't get to first base*

To make no impression, get no good results. "If you send a well-written, educated letter to the President, you won't get to first base. But if you write something with a pencil and scrawled on an old tablet sheet, you'll get some recognition, for all the politicians are looking for the vote of the people,

and a half-illiterate fellow is to them the people."

*first come, first served*

Equal treatment for all.

*first hundred years are the hardest*

A jocular statement concerning a tough job or proposition.

*"The First Noel"*

A favorite Christmas song, very popular with us on our Christmas serenadings.

*first off*

Right away, immediately, instantly. "First off, he let loose some holy shouting and singing."

*first thing out of the box*

Immediately, at once, same as "the first news you knew."

*first whippoorwill*

The first notes of the whippoorwill signify winter is ended, and it is time to plant corn.

*Fish*

A child's game of cards in which one child draws blindly from the hand of another, hoping to match a card in his hand. And when one player gets all his cards in matching fours, he wins the game.

*Fish* bite best when it's raining.

*Fish* is brain food.

drink like a *fish*

swims like a *fish*

There are as good *fish* in the sea as ever were caught out of it.

as much at home as a *fish* in water

like a *fish* out of water

Use a small *fish* to catch a big one.

If the first *fish* you hook gets away, then your luck is ruined for that day.

I'll make you *fishers* of men.

As I was walking through the wheat  
I picked up something good to eat,  
Neither *fish, flesh, fowl nor bone*,  
I kept it till it walked alone.

(Riddle — An egg)

*fishhooks*

Scrawly, undecipherable writing.

*fishing*

Pointing the conversation so that one may receive compliments. "There you go again, Maisie, always fishing."

*fish in troubled waters*

Stir up trouble where trouble already is.

*fish or cut bait*

Come to a decision, make a choice.

*fish swimmer*

The inflated air sac inside of a fish. When I was a little boy, I had a playmate named Rassie (see "barlow knife") and he taught me all sorts of things, among them to believe that if I swallowed a fish swimmer, as we called it, I would be able to swim like a fish. So we caught a little pike in Middle Prong Creek and I finally swallowed the sac. I jumped in and nearly drowned. Rassie saved me, then stood on the bank, bowing up and down with shrieks of laughter and derision at my gullibility.

*a nice kettle of fish*

A quandary, an ironical situation. "L.B.J. has got himself a nice kettle of fish in that Vietnam War."

*have other fish to fry*

Business to attend to.

*Fishy, fishy* in the brook,  
Daddy caught it with a hook,  
Mammy fried it in a pan,  
Sonny et it like a man.

(A recitation rhyme.)

*fist*

Handwriting.

*fist and skull*

A bare-fisted, knock-down and drag-out fight.

"There is nothing like a lightning fist and skull tangle to work the grudge out of a man," said Uncle Robert Light to me one day. "Yessir. I can remember 'way back to right after the Civil War when I was a teeny boy. I had a bad fight with Len Ragland. I was standing on the school ground at Crowder's Grove when Len slipped up behind me and tripped me up. Ah—ee, I was never hurt so bad in all my born days. He like to have killed me. I swore then that some day I'd get it back on him — I'd whip him if

it was the last thing I ever did. Well, his family moved out'n the Harnett country and I didn't see him for long eighteen years. Come to think of it, it might have been fifteen years, but it was a long time. Then one day I met up with him at Uncle Josh's ferry on the river. I was coming out of Lillington and he was going toward town. We recognized each other. Yes, we did. I was riding a horse and had a pistol strapped around me. I was a deputy sheriff then. I stopped the horse and called out to Len. 'Well, Len,' I said, 'it's been long enough now and we might as well settle our little matter.' So I got down and started taking off my coat. 'Great God, Bob,' he said, 'you sure can hold a grudge a long time.' 'Yeh,' I said, 'and if you had been hurt that day as bad as I was, you'd hold a grudge a long time. You liked to've killed me and I never have forgot it.' 'But Lord, Bob,' he said, 'you're an officer of the law now and I can't fight an officer.' 'I ain't no officer no longer,' I said, and I pulled off my badge and flung it on the ground. 'But you got a pistol too,' he said. 'No, I ain't got a pistol,' I said. I unstrapped it and laid it aside. 'Come on, Len,' I said.

"And we went to it.

"Well, sir, I'm here to tell you that fellow near 'bout killed me again. He was a man! And I was a man too! I weighed a hundred and eighty-five in them days and had done a little boxing on the sly. And I can tell you we tore up the ground down there by the river that day — Len and me did. Ah-ee, he was a much man! And as I said, he near 'bout killed me again.

"We finally quit. I helped him all bloody-faced up in his road cart, and I got on my horse somehow and made it home. And the part of my shirt that was left was the collar band with part of my necktie rolled in it.

"Well, after that, next Sunday, or a few Sundays after — as soon as we were able to get about — we met at the church. And he was a sight to see! He was walking with two walking sticks and his head was sorter cranksided. It pleased me so to see him in that condition that I felt right friendly toward him. We shook hands and called it square. And we kept good friends until the day he died. You know what they put on his tombstone — some words that I told 'em to put — 'the bravest man I ever knew and the truest friend I ever had.' "

### *fistes*

Fists.

### *fist law*

A law of physical force.

### *fist-raised dick*

A penis toughened through masturbation practices. Dr. Lloyd of Chapel Hill told me about this, saying that he preferred that to the kind that was toughened by intercourse with prostitutes. "It's a dang sight less dangerous,"



he said.

*fit*

Ready to, about to. "He laughed till he was fit to die."

An exasperated condition, to be bothered to the point of explosion. "That girl with her talk always gives me a fit."

Past tense of fight, fou't.

*fit as a fiddle*

To be in fine health, good spirits, everything just right.

*fits like a glove*

To fit exactly, to be exactly suitable.

*fitten*

Fitting.

*fittified*

Subject to fits.

*fit to a T*

An exact fit.

*fit to be tied*

In a wild hysterical condition.

*five fingers*

Shaking hands to confirm an agreement.

*five of clubs*

A fist. "Lawd, that boy shouldn't've messed with that big man. That five of clubs laid him low."

*a fix*

A frame-up.

*fix*

To cheat.

To prepare, to get ready. "He's fixing to go."

A critical condition. "Have you heard about Rex Johnson? He's in a fix, I'll tell you."

*in the middle of a bad fix*

To be in a tough situation, precarious condition.

*fixings*

Decorations, side-trimmings, adornments, pretties, doodads.

Eddie York's pretty wife Ola loved fixings, and Eddie loved the land and the crops he could grow on it. I knew these two young people and was something of a witness to the tragedy that fell upon them. My sympathy as well as my imagination mainly went with Eddie.

A wonderful worker Eddie was — one of the best in the whole Valley. Let it be rolling logs, splitting rails, or cutting with a cradle, he stood at the top. And many a hot August day when "the monkey" (the heat) was riding old man McLaughlin's hands in the bottom, Eddie's loud halloo could be heard among them, urging them on to their fodder-pulling. Three hundred bundles a day was easy for him. Yea, he could pull five stacks in a week, had done it all right. And on a particular boiling July day — a day I visualize to myself — he had set a new mark for hoeing cotton. Three acres of grassy stuff chopped out by one man was a record. He thought about it. Who could equal it? He was mad, mad to the bottom now he was. Mad and hurt. And his hurt and anger drove him, beat on him like a flail, hooked and prodded him on like an iron goad. He had quarreled with Ola. Aih, worse than that, he had slapped her. A little slap, not much — he glanced at his heavy hands.

But he had stood enough to make any man mad. What had got into her nohow? Here he was with the grass eating his cotton up and he hoeing his liver out trying to save it. So much rainy weather, and the grass growing two inches a day. And she — lying up in the house down there in the field, doing nothing — ready to spend every copper cent she could get on fixings, buying lace and jewelry from the peddlers who passed in the lane. "Says she's done working in the fields, she does," he muttered wrathfully. "Yea, but I'll see!" And his hoe flew to the ground. He had had no dinner, his stomach was empty. Evening was coming on. Everything looked gray, lonesome, it sure did. And now he'd have to go on home. The mule and the cow had to be fed and there were the shoats too. "Dang, I didn't never plan on things like this!"

He loved Ola, always had. Temper it was. Too much temper. His mother used to say it would bring him trouble. He'd ought to be patient. Still, Ola had tried him — worried him nigh to death it seemed. And now he remembered that in their courting days old man McLaughlin had warned him of Ola's dressing and finery. Her pappy and mammy couldn't satisfy her. They were too poor. Take a bank to hold her, he had said. That's right, she didn't treat him decent, and he slaving day in and day out to get ready to buy a piece of land of their own. They were both the children of tenant farmers, the grandchildren of tenant farmers, the great-grandchildren, and on back. But he'd change it for himself. He'd pay taxes on his own land before he died, he would. Aih, she knew his ambition, knew what he intended when she married him and she seemed glad.

He stamped and spat upon the ground.

He tore through a dozen more rows before the dusk came sifting in

from the east. And when the moon had begun to shine up in the middle of the sky, he stopped his hoe and stood gazing over the wide rich fields. He would make big cotton here, a bale and half to the acre and more maybe. And over there toward the hollow was his corn, popping with strength and as green as poison. He was a farmer and this was his, the earth was his. It was fine, aye it was, bless God! This level forty acres would be his in a year or two. McLaughlin had promised to sell it to him for his very own as soon as he could pay a thousand dollars down. Money.

Ola would have to quit spending his money. Not another cent to waste, not another brownie. No sir, not a damn red! It was foolish. It was foolish for her always to be looking through Sears Roebuck's catalogue, picking out lace curtains and tablecloths and window shades. He'd told her a thousand times. And then this morning — yea, God! With a muttered oath, he turned and went off through the darkness home.

He fed the mule and cow and the clamorous pigs. As he came up the walk to the house where Ola had wasted a lot of good guano planting a border of cannas, he saw her sitting on the porch in a cool white dress. And then, fool that he was — his heart suddenly softened toward her and he could have taken her in his arms. She was sweet. She was always clean and cool and sweet. He stopped before the steps embarrassed, trying to think of something to say. The lamp was lighted on the table in the room behind, and he saw the waiting supper spread out on a new white tablecloth. Aih, that was it — finery, fixings! She would ruin him yet. His heart hardened again.

"Supper's ready," she said. "I got tired of waiting and had mine."

He went on into the kitchen, soused his face and arms in a pan of water and dried them hurriedly on a fresh towel, then seated himself to his meal.

"Don't you want nothing more, Ola?" he called.

"I've had my supper," she answered.

He leant over the table eating in huge mouthfuls. He fed his hunger with beans, sidemeat, cornbread, preserves, and a few pieces of fried chicken, washing it all down with great gulps of black coffee. His powerful sweaty arms made streaks on the new cloth, but what did he care, consumed as he was by hunger and the fiery thought within?

When he had finished, he sat picking bits of meat from his teeth with his fingernails. Ola had reproved him for this and other bad manners. Yeh, let her. Now and then he could hear her stirring in her chair on the porch. He was tired and sleepy, and if all was right he might go happily to bed against the next day's labor. But now — no, he was too worried to sleep. She was out there thinking things. He would go out and talk to her, find out some of these things that were always working in her mind.

Sitting down on the steps, he took off his shoes and stretched his feet in the soft sand of the walkway. He waited, hoping she would say something,

for he could find no words. But she held her peace. Time went by and drowsiness began to steal over him. Like a dream he heard the frogs croaking down near the millpond and an owl screaming further in the swamp beyond.

"You're sweaty. The tub's by the well there." Her words startled him. He fumbled with his shoes and made no answer. Presently she went into the house and brought him a cake of scented-smelling soap and a cloth. As she came near him the odor of rich Fayetteville cologne entered his nostrils. She was sweet enough to eat — sweet — ah, Lord!

"Peddler been by today?" he asked quietly, choking down his anger, the while the cake of soap and cloth trembled in his hands.

"No," she answered coldly, "no."

"Looks like a new tablecloth. Thought maybe you'd been a-buying."

"Your money didn't buy it. It was brought to me." She turned sharply and sat again in her chair.

"Who brung it?"

"Ella and her friend from Raleigh. They had dinner here."

"A high-collared dude, riding round this busy time of the year. He'd better stay away from here. I could take him in my two hands and break him like a dead dog-fennel stalk." Ola laughed softly. "Now what do you mean by that?"

"I'm going to Raleigh tomorrow with him to visit Ella a while," she said.

"And the grass eating up our crop!" he cried incredulously.

"Yes, eating up your crop."

"By God, you won't!" he roared wrathfully, as he got up and began walking back and forth barefooted in the yard. "Not with that loose woman!"

"I'm going, I tell you," and her voice quavered. "I'm going to get a rest from your slaving and sweating and your dirt and all."

"Well, for God's sakes, listen at her! Listen at her!"

"I won't be run to death. Pa didn't run me to death."

"Pa didn't — and look at him. He's gonna die in the porehouse. And I ain't, I tell you." He felt a piece of broken glass cut into his bare foot but paid no attention to it. "Do all you can to rob and ruin me — I won't let you do it!" he snarled. Then turning he slumped down on the steps, hugging his knees in anger.

"And then this morning you hit me. If Pa knowed it, he'd come over here with his gun and shoot you down like a dog." Now she began sobbing.

"Dry up, dry up, I tell you. Hanh." He snorted scornfully, "I'll grab him up and bust his brain out ag'in the ground." He got to his feet and slammed his way into the house. "All right," he called back, "go on if you wish. See if I care! But you won't carry off none of my money. No. And you'll be back in a week." And he went to bed.

All night Ola sat on the porch, listening to his heavy snores coming

from the little back room. When the dawn broke beyond the old mill and the chickens flew out of the China tree with a clatter, she got up and started breakfast. While the biscuits were baking she went out and milked the cow for the last time.

Eddie rose and ate his meal in silence. When he'd filed his hoe and started into the fields he stopped and called, "Going, are you?"

"I am," she said.

"Well go and be damned!" he shouted. And off he went up the path, kicking the dust before him.

Again a second day he hoed from morn till evening. The fiery sun burned down upon his back, drying up the sweat and leaving splotches of salt upon his shirt. When night came he had another three acres hoed clean and standing up for the siding plow. Again he went home under the moon, devoured by hunger and thoughts within.

The house was closed and there was no light. He found a note stuck in the door. "I am gone," it said. "Don't look for me till you see me coming." He could read the clear letters in the moonlight. Tearing the paper into bits, he made his way to the lot to feed the stock. When he had cooked his supper, he gorged himself like an animal and lay down in his sweat-fouled clothes on the bed. Soon again his snores echoed through the house.

The next morning he woke and called her. And then he remembered that she had left him. It seemed as if his head flew all to pieces, for he began cursing in loud oaths, cursing her curtains, cursing her trimmings, and he even seized one of her flowerpots and hurled it crashing through the window into the yard. The calendars and magazine covers shook on the wall with the violence of his voice. He cooked his breakfast in the same unwashed pans and ate out of the same dirty plate of the night before. Why should he clean up now? Let the house rot down. Let the maggots work in the dishes. God knows, he didn't care.

All that week he did mountains of work. He hoed and plowed and plowed and hoed, driving his mule up and down the windy fields like one possessed. Old McLaughlin came and tried to commiserate with him, but grief and anger were eating in his heart like lye. He said, "Please let me alone."

The loneliness of the house, aih, that harried him to death. He became restless and unable to sleep at night. And on Sunday morning when he had shaved himself and sat alone on the porch staring across the wide burning fields, he gave in. Fishing out a stub of pencil he wrote:

Dear Ola,

Won't you come back? i speck i done you wrong. I'll do better, honest i will. the crop is in good shape. and there aint so much to do. there aint nobody to churn and theys a pile of eggs i cant eat. im well and hope the same. — Ed.

He set off up the road, dropped it in the mailbox and waited.

The next week he worked, worked and waited. The grass was killed, the cotton sided, and all looked fine. Then came a note from Ola saying, "I am having a good time. Please look in the top bureau drawer and send me my white slippers. Don't work too hard. — Ola." He was stupefied with rage. All that afternoon he sat on the porch unmindful of his crops and the world about him. A vast and molten wrath consumed him, bloodshot his eyes and made the back of his head thick with pain. Near night he rushed into the house and began putting on his store-bought suit. "I'll go get her, I'll go get her!" he kept shouting to himself. Hurrying to the barn, he hitched the mule to the buggy and went driving away in a cloud of dust to the north.

Late that night he drove up the shining main street of the capital city. The bright lights astonished, even frightened him. But he held his way. Turning to the right near the middle of town, he went several blocks eastward and stopped before a small frame house. There was a stir inside and light came on as he hammered on the door. "Who's that, who's that?" Ella's sleepy voice called. And then he heard a man's voice in the room speaking to her.

"It's me," he cried, pushing his way into the hall. "And I want Ola."

A door opened in the hall and Ola came out, all beautiful in a clinging blue robe.

"Ola, Ola," he said, "come home."

"Ooh!" she screamed. And then she laughed queerly and said, "I'm not going — now!"

"When you coming, Ola? When?" he begged hoarsely.

And then she overdid it. "Maybe next year," she said, and gave that little laugh again. Ella went away and left them alone.

"Git your things, I tell you," he almost whispered, "and get out of this bad house."

"I ain't going. Good night. You're crazy as a fool, Ed."

Temper, temper, that was it. For he couldn't keep his hands off her — hands that could lift a bale of cotton. She couldn't make a whisper, not a sound as he choked her.

Then he stumbled down the walk to his buggy. He'd done it all right. He'd killed her all right. He could still feel the softness of her throat in his fingers. He knew all the time, every long mile to Raleigh, that's the way it'd be. He'd choke her to death. Temper, temper. With a clatter of blows, he urged his mule toward the south. A big star shining above the road he traveled caught his eye as he drove, and he rocked his head in grief, "I wisht I was where that star is, clean away, Oh, I do—" And he sobbed as he passed the moonlit hedges.

When the sheriff came for him in his little house, he was quiet and

dignified. Aih, he was sitting on the porch dressed in his Sunday best with his head bent over in his hands. The dishes were washed, the floor swept, the flowers watered, and all in order. He went away like a child and stayed so till the last day.

### *fixments*

Trimmings, decorations, same as fixings.

### *fixture*

One who has a settled position, a long-term job holder. "Miss Durham is a fixture in the bank."

### *fizzle*

To fart.

### *flabbergast*

To confuse to undoing, to mystify, to bother unduly.

### *woman with her flag up*

In her menses. "Say, Bo, you just as well let that woman alone, she's got her flag up."

### *sweet flag*

Sometimes called calamus root. It grows along banks of streams and ponds and in swampy meadows. Its dried root was once used by the Indians for chest troubles. It is also supposed to be good for the digestion.

I remember old Miss Minty Gaskins who used to visit us and stay to tiresome irritation. I can still see her sitting in front of the fire, taking out her stained handkerchief with her bony yellow trembling hands and getting out a little piece of flag root. She would break off a pinch, put it into her toothless jaws and sit there munching contentedly away and staring empty before her.

### *flam*

Nod, jerk of the head that says go, okay. "And his flam of the head said, 'Go baby, go!' "

### *flame*

A sweetheart.

### *flang*

Past tense of fling.

At a Negro camp meeting the spirit was especially active and a lot of shouting and holy hopping took place. One hefty old woman caught in the fervor of the occasion jumped and hopped down the church aisle and out into the open. In her wild cavortings she fell sprawling into a mud puddle and lay there puffing and blowing and giggling with happiness.

“We better help her — she might get drowned,” said one of the sisters, appealing to the preacher who had come out.

“Nah, nah” he said, “leave her lay where Jesus flang her.”

I was told of a court case where the word “flang” was also vividly used. A long, tall yellow girl had indicted a little sawed-off black fellow for raping her — and raping her while she was standing up. This was bemusing not only to the court audience but to the judge. He addressed the plaintiff kindly and asked if she would explain to the court how this happened.

“Well, suh, yo’ honor,” she said, “he flang a bucket over my head and hung down by the handle.”

### *flannel*

A soft woolen cloth much used for underwear.

It was also used in the old days in the making of poultices and plasters. For this purpose red flannel was preferred. Why, I don’t know. If any of us children had colds or were threatened with colds, Mother would out with a good sized piece of red flannel, plaster it thoroughly with mutton tallow and fasten it on our chests. It always helped.

### *flannel mouth*

A sycophant, a soft-soaper.

### *flap*

The front part of a man’s trousers, the fly.

Also gassy talk. “Don’t give me all that flap.”

A faux pas, also a quarrel, a row.

### *flapper*

A term used years ago for forward young girls.

There was a song that went about in those days that could apply also to the miniskirt craze. It ran somewhat like this as I remember:

“If the dresses get any shorter,  
Said the flapper with a sob,  
There’ll be two more cheeks to powder  
And a lot more hair to bob.”

I recently sent this to a newspaper columnist, hoping he might use it. He confessed he’d like to but he didn’t dare to. This reminded me of the Hays Code in Hollywood, used to judge and pass on the “moral” nature of the movie scripts. For instance, the office would forbid a writer’s including the sound of a flushed toilet in his script. And I remember when I was writing a picture for Will Rogers called *Dr. Bull*, I had a shotgun wedding in it. John Ford was the director, and he and I were both irritated and had some



laughter at the ruling of the Breen Office which said we couldn't use shotguns, because this was censorable in Kansas and many other states, and suggested that we use baseball bats — let the two irate brothers show up and stand in the background with baseball bats when the ceremony was taking place, so it was filmed that way. How timid, priggish and hypocritical can we be.

*flare out*

To burst out in a tirade. "Don't flare out at me like that if you know what's best for you, hosscake."

*flare up*

To get angry easily.

*flash in the pan*

A phony, one who promises much and can give little, one who has first success and then can't follow it up with any other.

A *flash of lightning* means God is winking his eye.

*flashy*

Showy, ostentatious in one's dress or behavior.

*flat*

A gust of wind. "A flat struck him, and over in the gulley, bicycle and all, he went."

A level-topped ferry. I remember the old flat on the Cape Fear River that used to carry us over to Lillington. It was run by old Uncle Josh. He would pole it across and haul us with our wagon or buggy, and what a wonderful piece of seagoing machinery this was to my childish eyes. I remember hearing how on the day they hanged Negro Purvis there in Lillington the hundreds of people returning home swamped Uncle Josh and his flat. They rushed on and nearly sank it, and some of the folks fell in the water and were almost drowned. Finally, some strong-armed and strong-minded people took charge of things and Uncle Josh with the helpers finally got them all across. Tired out and weary but satisfied in seeing nigger Purvis dangling from the gallows, they reached home.

*flat* as a floor

*flat* as a flounder

*flat* as a fritter

*flat* as a pancake

*flat broke*

Completely broke, without a penny.

*flatform*

A platform.

*flathead*

A wood grub under rotten pine bark. We boys used to strip the bark off rotten logs in the woods hunting for flatheads to fish with. They were supposed to be the best bait of all. I remember when I was a little tiny boy I made myself a fishhook out of a crooked pin, went in the woods and got a flathead and, being too small to go to the creek, I fished in a dry ditch, imagining it was full of water. Now and then I would have a bite and jerk up a most wonderful shining bouncing fish and look at him there wiggling in the grass, so proud in my mind that I could dance.

*flatiron*

The heavy iron usually heated at the fireplace and used to iron clothes.

*flat of one's back*

Lying face up, supine.

*flat out*

Completely, violently, etc. "In the scene where Father Martin christens little Virginia Dare, the baby flat out bit him."

*flatwoods*

Level timberland.

*flaxseed*

To get a cinder or grain of sand out of one's eye, we used to put a flaxseed in and the flow of hot water washed both seed and cinder out.

*fleabane (colt's tail)*

A tea from this plant was used as a stimulant tonic and general health builder. Also it was supposed to be a good cure for gonorrhea.

*fleabite*

An insignificant thing, an insufficient quantity, an unimportant word or happening.

*fleabitten*

A horse covered with small brown freckles.

*He would skin a flea for his hide and tallow.*

Excessive stinginess.

*flea in one's bonnet*

A hidden purpose or intent. Same as bee in one's bonnet.

*put a flea in one's ear*

To give information, also to warn.

He who sleeps with dogs will scratch *fleas*.

*fled* like rats from a sinking ship

*fleece*

To cheat, to rob.

*fleet* as the wind

*flesh and blood*

Close kin.

*make one's flesh crawl*

Same as make one's flesh creep. Horrifying, outrageous, distasteful. I remember how the sound of filing hoes out in the cotton fields used to make my flesh crawl. I still don't like the sound.

*fleshen up*

To grow stout, increase in weight.

*neither flesh, fowl nor good red herring*

To be in a dilemma of indecision, indeterminate, wishy-washy.

*fleshly*

Worldly, not spiritual.

*flibbity-gibbet*

Harum-scarum, wildly eccentric, silly.

You can catch more *flies* with a spoonful of honey than a gallon of vinegar.

*no flies on him*

Impeccable, also industrious, quick-moving.

*Flinch*

Card game.

*flinders*

Small pieces, splinters. "He beat him to flinders."

*to fling a fit and fall in it*

To go into hysterics, wild behavior.

*flint*

A hard person, a cynical person.

An arrowhead. "Down in that old field there below Blake's hill you can pick up Indian flints anytime you want to."

*flip*

A light blow, a thump on the head.

Disdainful, pert. "Don't give me any more flip talk, woman, for they's a creeper been here — I can smell him."

*flipper*

The hand.

A flat-ended piece of springy wood which we boys used to use to shoot peas or BB shot or tiny pebbles. We usually made them from hickory or white oak. They were held in one hand while the other hand was used to hold a small pebble or BB shot against the flat end and, bending it back, we let it go. It would shoot sometimes forty or fifty yards. We boys used to use them in war games, and at times to sting the girls there at old Pleasant Union schoolhouse.

*flippity-flop*

Draggle-tailed.

*flirting of the heart*

Fluttering of the heart.

*flirting with death*

Be overly-reckless, like lighting a cigarette in front of an open gas jet.

*flitters*

Pieces, bits, rags, same as "flinders."

*flitty*

Flighty.

*floater*

A lazy kind of pitch in baseball, a sort of knuckle ball that would come toward the batter seeming to float and not spin.

A ne'er-do-well.

*floating heart*

A congestive heart.

*flog a willing horse*

To urge on someone who already is doing his best.

*floodgate*

A watergate in the forebay of a grist mill. It is opened to turn the mill wheel for grinding.

*floozy*

A loose woman, a trollop.

*Florida handshake*

The beggar's outstretched hand for alms.

*flounce about*

To show off.

To move with self-conscious display or temper. "She flounced out of the house and banged the door."

*flourish* like a green bay tree*flowering dogwood*

A small tree which grows well under larger trees and is common from Canada to Florida and west to Kansas and Oklahoma. Among the Valley people it is perhaps the favorite of all trees and its shower of white blossoms over the landscape in spring is a wonder to behold. In autumn its foliage is a beautiful burnished red. Its berries are succulent food for the birds after the first frost.

The wood is close-grained and, when dried out or cured, is almost as hard as iron. The butt of a good-sized tree made a tough and long-lasting maul. Also we used it for gluts (wedges) in the splitting of fence rails and posts. My shucking peg was always made of a piece of dogwood, fire-cured at the point.

I've had different explanations for the name "dogwood." One was that because of its hardness daggers were made from it, and dagger-wood became dogwood. Another was that dogs (blocks) used in weaving were made of this wood.

Tea made from dried leaves of the tree was once used as a tonic, also as a purgative.

like a *flower* in the hair of a corpse

Full many a *flower* is born to blush unseen.

like a *flower* on a dung heap

*say it with flowers*

To speak sympathetically or politely, to praise something, to extend sympathy.

*"Flow Gently, Sweet Afton"*

A popular picnic and hayriding old song. I always thought it was Scotch through and through. It is in feeling, though the music to Robert Burns'

poem was written by an American minister living in Bardstown, Kentucky, a Reverend J.E. Spilman.

*flub-dub*

A bungler, a nonentity. "And then Senator Markham brought down the house when he said in that charming way he had, 'Our president is just a flub-dub.' "

*fluff*

A girl.

*fluke*

A chance happening, good or bad. "State College won at the last minute by a fluke."

*flumadiddle*

A mommick, a mess, a bust.

*flummox*

To distress, upset.

To cheat or confuse.

*flury*

"The morning was cold as flury." My father used to use that word flury all the time, never fury.

*flustration*

Frustration.

*flusticate*

To confuse, to embarrass.

*flute player or flutist*

A homosexual, same as a piccolo player.

*flutter wheel*

A little waterwheel made of crossed pieces of very light wood with small paddles. We boys used to make them and dam up little branches after a rain. Then we'd set up our flutter wheels in a sluice and watch them with delight as they merrily turned.

*floody flux*

Diarrhea.

stuck like a *fly* in flypaper

like a *fly* in hot manure

*fly around*

To court. "That Mason boy is flying around Sally Matthews these days."

*Fly Away, Jack*

A children's game. The leader or speaker sticks a bit of paper on each index finger and places these fingers, nails up, on the table, then recites:

"Two little birds sat on a hill,  
One called Jack and the other called Jill.  
Fly away, Jack."

At this command the hand is lifted quickly, the index finger doubled under, and the second finger brought down on which there is no paper. The command to Jill follows with the same action. The change of fingers is rarely noticed. Then wonder of wonders at the command of "Come back, Jack," the finger reappears with the bit of paper restored. And so with Jill.

I remember how amazed we children were when Mother first tried this magic on us. How in the world did those bits of paper disappear from those fingers and then quick as blinking get back on them!

*fly-blowed*

Damaged, partly decayed. "Don't try to palm off that old piece of fly-blowed mutton on me."

*fly bonnet*

A bonnet, usually stiffened by the insertion of pieces of cardboard in the lining, and coming down covering the back of the neck and the sides of the face. The women working in the field always wore them as a protection from the sun. They varied in color and were sometimes very charming.

*take a flyer*

To make a risky gamble usually for big stakes.

*fly-flapper (fly-flap)*

A brush or homemade paper-cut fan to keep the flies away from the table. We used to make them by taking pieces of crepe paper, cutting little serrated teeth along the edge and then, inserting a long-handled stick in the upper part of the roll, we used them to fan the flies. Usually when we had fieldhands or people coming for log-rolling or fodder-pulling, someone would stand beside the table and work the fly-flapper during the meal. Otherwise the flies would about take things. It was not the same as a fly swatter, because we didn't kill the flies, we simply frightened them off.

*fly high*

To show off, spend money excessively.

*flying mare (jenny)*

We used to have more fun with these flying mares than most anything. We would go into the woods, clear a place with a medium-size tree in the center, cut it off about four or five feet above the ground, and then chop around the upper part of that to leave a little pivot, usually an inch and a half or two inches thick, a sort of a round axled protrusion. Then we'd cut a pole some ten to fifteen feet long, split an opening in the middle, drop a wedge into this middle and then insert the opening over the little pivot of wood. With that pole horizontal we had us a flying mare, a sort of merry-go-around. We'd hang over the ends of the pole and go flying around, and it never occurred to us that our plaything was crude and we were to be pitied for having such makeshift entertainment. We thought these things were wonderful, and they were wonderful. All we needed was a little time to get free from our labors to make us a flying mare. And about the best time we would have would be Sunday. But the usual forbidden authority of the Sabbath hindered us, because if we went in the woods and were heard chopping with an axe, we would be severely reprimanded as being sinful and breaking God's holy Sabbath. The best thing we could do would be to kneel down right there and ask forgiveness of Old Master in the sky.

*flying squirrel*

An extremely interesting animal, smaller than the usual squirrel, and with such loose skin that it can fly or spring out from great heights of trees and spread the skin in such a way as to parachute down, as it were. These creatures are becoming very scarce in North Carolina.

*fly in the ointment*

A drawback, a difficulty of bad sorts, the penalty.

*fly off the handle (hinges)*

To get excited, angry, explode in a temper.

*fly one's kite*

To brag, to self-advertise.

*fly out*

To rage or have a burst of temper.

*fly-specked*

Anything covered with the minute droppings of flies.

*fly the coop*

To run away, to escape, said of a young girl sometimes when she runs away to get married. In the old days it used to be the custom down in Harnett County that if young people under age wanted to get married they would run away and cross the border into South Carolina. McColl was a haven



for these runaway marriages.

My great-great-great grandfather, Colonel Alexander McAllister, had a daughter named Janet who ran away and married Malcolm McNeill, later the first sheriff of Moore County. Recently I came across an old letter of the Colonel's in which he was writing to his brother, and he said that two of his daughters had made runaway marriages and he had not asked after them since nor did he ever expect to.

I also found a letter from Janet dated 1774 which she wrote to the Colonel. "Honored Father, it is no longer in my power to Consele the greff of mind that I have fealt Seance I Comitted so ondutifull a crime as I shall Ever Call it — and that which hath aded to my greff the seeing of you twice or thre times without you Ever takeing the Lest notis of me which has allmost broke my hart."

Her grave is in the old Tirzah (Summerville) churchyard some two miles west of Lillington. Where her husband is buried I don't know.

### *fly time*

The hot summer time, especially July and August, when flies are most numerous and the farm animals are most persecuted. I remember how I used to plough the corn or cotton in the late summer and how the horse flies and all kinds of dog flies would persecute the poor mule to madness almost. We always welcomed a little buzzing bumblebee sort of insect which we called horse guards, a yellow striped insect which came around and was supposed to chase the horse flies and persecuting flies away. I never did see such chasing going on, but I always felt comforted when I saw one of the horse guards. I imagined that the persecution of the pestiferous flies grew less during the appearance of this insect and the mule seemed to plough better.

### *flytrap*

The mouth.

See "pitcher plant," also "Venus's flytrap."

### *go fly a kite*

Mind your own business, leave me alone.

### *on the fly*

Hurriedly, hit or miss, on the run. "They got married on the fly, but they've had plenty of time to repent and settle down since."

### *foalded*

Foaled.

### *fo'by*

Forebay. The wooden-framed bay cut through a dam where water from the dammed up pond or lake can enter before it is released to pour down into

a turbine and stir it into action. The turbine axle is part of a millstone axle or of a belted wheel axle that turns the stone. Meal or flour resulting from this grinding is usually described as “waterground” and is supposed to be better than other grindings such as electrical, steam or oil power. The reason for this, an old-timer told me, is that a water-turned millstone grinds more slowly and doesn’t heat up the meal.

*fodder*

Food. “Chris Green looks like she’s off her fodder — she’s pale and peaked.”

*fodder bundle*

In the old days we used to pull fodder, that is, strip the ripened blades from the corn stalks, tie them in what we called “hands,” double up the stalk and stick the hand on top of it for drying. Then the following evening when the dew fell and the fodder hands had cured, we would march up and down the rows tying three hands to the bundle and throwing the bundles into a center row to be carried to a waiting wagon or to the fodder stack and packed there for later use. This was our main staple for animal forage. In recent years, though, fodder pulling has passed away and an acre or two of hay on the separate farms can furnish much more forage than several acres of pulled fodder. But we used to have fun trying to outpull one another, racing one another to the end of the row. Mr. Joe Johnson, a neighbor, was the fastest fodder puller around, even faster than Cleveland Johnson. But the way he did it, he would grab a few blades, stomp down the stalk, and move on to the next one.

*fodder-forker*

A hayhand or farmer.

*fodder stack*

A cylindrical stack some eight to twelve feet high in which the fodder was stacked with the heads in toward the central pole and the tails of the blade outward. At the top they were capped with other blades to help turn the water during the winter. And as a farmer needed them, he brought the stacked fodder to the barn and fed it to his cattle.

*fog*

Ignorance or lack of understanding. “The solution of the poverty problem is all fog to me.”

To throw with great speed. “Old Big Train really fogged that ball by ’em today.” Big Train was the affectionate title of Walter Johnson, the great Washington baseball pitcher. As a young man I saw him pitch one game, and my mouth stayed open in admiration for the whole two hours. He was one of the quickest pitchers I ever saw. He didn’t have much of a windup and he didn’t wait to put on any gymnastics or pantomime, but received

the ball back from the catcher, whirled around, and fogged it back toward the batter.

A rising *fog* foretells rain, a falling *fog* no rain.

*foggiest*

Unclear, murky, to lack knowledge of. "I haven't the foggiest notion what to do about my boy."

*foggy*

Tipsy, half-drunk, confused.

*foghorn*

A loud blatant person, especially a ranting politician, a type quite common in the South since the Civil War.

*in the fold*

A religious believer.

*folk beliefs*

Concepts, ideas, attitudes of the people as to life, death, the hereafter, and as to pragmatic matters, daily living, sickness, cures, etc., most of them unscientific, ranging from ethics to religious superstitions. These folk beliefs are not limited to the country people or the ignorant ones of the land, but they are part of the life of all our people. Some of the most superstitious people are the so-called scientists and, of course, I always think of the extrasensory perception people at Duke University, as well as the extreme Christian Scientists, faith healers, patent medicine addicts, the phony advertisings, etc., etc.

*folk cures*

Usually home remedies or remedies handed down from generation to generation, such as cures for warts, stomachaches, headaches, etc., etc. About 90 percent, I should say, of the cures dispensed through the present-day drug stores are folk cures. From the point of view of science they have no value, but from the point of view of folk belief and comfort they have a great deal of value.

I remember being in Grantham's Drug Store in Dunn once, and talking to Mr. Grantham, who happened to be a trustee of the University of North Carolina, about the huge display of patent medicine he had on his shelves — Dr. Pierce's Golden Remedy Discoveries, sarsaparilla, cardui, Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, etc., etc. And he told me that he eased his conscience in selling the stuff through the fact that so many people got cured or helped by it because they believed in it. "For instance," he says, "take peruna. I sell hundreds of bottles of that stuff and, of course, a lot of our prohibition guys who can't get liquor drink it for its kicks. But patent

medicine is here to stay,” he said. While we were talking, a Negro woman came in with a little boy. She called Mr. Grantham “Doctor.” She said, “Doctor, I brung the boy here for you to look at him like you said.” Mr. Grantham took the boy and, followed by the woman, went into the rear of the store. I heard him back there saying a few things, and then pretty soon he came out and got a little tin box of salve and sold it to the woman for fifty cents which she fished deep out of her pocket, and she and the boy went outside. Mr. Grantham continued, “Take that boy there, now he’s got what you call a dropped palate, and his mother brought him in here two or three days ago. I tried to get her to go to the doctor, but she didn’t believe in them regular doctors. She said that I must have some kind of medicine here to help her boy, and she asked me to work on him. And so back there a moment ago I took a bit of his kinky wool, got hold of it on top of his head, gave it two or three jerks, and looked in his mouth and told him that his palate was getting all right, and then I sold her this slave to rub on his throat.” I stared at Mr. Grantham in shocked surprised. He shrugged his shoulders, laughed and said, “Human nature’s funny, ain’t it?” I nodded and started out of the store, and then stopped. “That reminds me,” I said, “I wanted a bottle, large size, of Vick’s nosedrops.”

“Coming right up,” said Mr. Grantham, as he turned to the shelf with a smile.

Then there was the case of Dr. Hyde. One day I was sitting with Mr. Mac in his millhouse, eating a barbecue lunch snack, and he told me about one of the most famous fake doctors of the old days in the Valley, this Dr. Hyde.

“Now you may know,” he said, “that back in the old times people in the Valley believed more in healing by prayer and laying on of consecrated hands than they do now, though you might not think so, seeing the doings at Falcon and in so many of the Pentecostal Holiness churches. But they did, at least I think so. Anyway the story of Dr. Hyde would seem to prove it.

“During a long protracted meeting at old Moriah Church all sorts of people with aches and pains came in to be healed by prayer and laying on of hands, and the Holy Ghost, they say, was powerful in their behalf. Right in the midst of things, though, this Doctor Hyde showed up trying to sell his folk medicines. But the Holy Spirit had been doing so well with the sick and infirm that business for him was no good at all, that is, at first.

“Hyde had a light wagon fixed up like a peddler’s outfit. And on each side of the wagon body he had painted in big letters *Doctor Hyde’s Home Remedies*. He had a little Negro boy that drove for him, all dressed up like a monkey with a red cap and a coat with bells on it. And remedies! Dr. Hyde had them. He had madstone cures for snakebite and rabies, wart cures, pills for chills and fever, tonics for rundown feelings and lost manhood, cures for boils, tetters, scurvy, scrofula, dropsy, piles, fistula, gravel, female

obstructions, nightmares, purges for bile and yellow ja'ndice, and powders for dysentery, liver complaint, and salivation — everything you could think of. He even had a yellow turpentine salve for cure of the seven-year itch.

“So this ‘doctor’ drove around from door to door in the neighborhood but he sold little or nothing. Next day when the revival meeting was in full swing at the church he showed up there. The little Negro sat outside while the doctor went in. The testimonies were going on, and different people were standing up one by one to give thanks unto Jesus and Him crucified and bespeaking the list of their bountiful blessings. When he got a chance, Doctor Hyde stood up. He too humbly thanked the Lord for all his tender mercy. This time he said he was especially thankful for the privilege God had given him in helping to cure the misery of the wide and suffering world. He went on and told something about his medicines. God had called him to be a doctor, he said. And God told him what to fix to cure folks. Yessir and amen, God had watched over him and instructed him in the healing herbs and mystic mixtures.

“Well, that warmed ’em up a little more. And the next day he got so far as to go around in the congregation and talk to sinners with the rest of the sanctified. And after Aunt Sudie Horton had brought up her dozen handkerchiefs to be prayed over to be put on the sore and afflicted — the way she’d been instructed through the mail by old Brother Yokum out in Los Angeles — then after all this had happened, Dr. Hyde rose and said he wanted the sisters and brothers to pray over his medicines so they might be increased in the power of their healing.

“After the church meeting broke up, they all went out to his wagon and stood around with their hands on it and consecrated it to the glory of God and the uplift of man. That made him one of them. And a number of folks bought some of his stuff. He told them he hated to charge them for it, and all it cost them was what it cost him. The government made him pay to bring the original ingredient stuff into this country, else he’d give it away free. He said he got the height of it from somewhere away in Asia or Africa.

“Then, lo and behold, the next day at church he just about took charge of the meeting. He stood up and praised God and slapped his hands and said he’d just got news from Virginia where two blind people had been cured with his medicines. And he went on telling of this and that, what he had done and what he could do. Everything, he said, was by the grace of God. Nothing in his own strength. When he spoke about the blind folks, everybody thought of Em Lucas and her bastard children — every one of them blind and Em herself blind. Everybody knew it was some bad blood disease made it, old rale or something. But they all had got to believing in him so by this time that they hoped he could do something for Em and her young ones. So some of the freehearted bought several bottles of this rain water and took

it down to Em. David Vance and Green Mumford, two unregenerate sinners who had lasted out the meeting, chipped in about half of the price. They said they didn't believe in it but still you never could tell. They too had felt the persuasion of Dr. Hyde, no doubt. That day Dr. Hyde did a rushing business. It was the last day of the meeting and he made it count. But he wasn't satisfied. The next day was to be the big baptizing at the Williams' millpond. And he announced that he was going to prove his loving devotion to his God by working a miracle. He wanted everybody to pray for him that it might be so. Jesus walked on the Sea of Galilee he said, and if the spirit was with him he might try the same in Williams' millpond.

"He showed up with his wagon loaded down with remedies. No doubt he and that little Negro had worked part of the night down at the creek by lantern light coloring water, filling up bottles and sticking on labels. Another part of the night they had been busy at something else, as David Vance and Green Mumford found out.

"Dave and Green were coming along home about three o'clock in the morning from sparking some fast gals over by Barclaysville. The weather was hot and the two rounders had been drinking mighty freely of Jamaica rum and needed to cool off. So they stopped when they got to the millpond and went in swimming, muddy as it was. And in paddling around they bumped into a narrow plank walkway built somewhat under the water. At first they didn't know what in the dickens it was, for foot-planks usually went over the water, not in it or under it. Then by putting two and two together they concluded that it was part of Dr. Hyde's doing and was connected with his miracle for the baptizing. The old rascal and the Negro had been there earlier in the night and put it up. So Dave and Green to surprise the doctor quietly lifted out a long section of the planking and carried it off.

"Dr. Hyde came next day with mergins of medicines. He told the folks he'd been to the siding where a fresh new supply had just been shipped in from the old world. He got the preachers and deacons to give him a little time before the ducking began. He stood in his wagon and soon had the whole crowd about him. And there was a crowd there that day, everybody for miles and their neighbors, it seemed like. Such a roll of talk as he turned loose! And all the time that little Negro sat there without saying a word. He was on to it all and he must have been snickering in his sleeve at the gang of fools handing up their fifty-centses and dollars. Dr. Hyde did a business that was a business that day. Lord, he was a greedy man! He wasn't satisfied. When he'd sold out, he told the fold that he fully believed God had given him power to work miracles.

"And while the Negro boy drove off to get another load of his mess that he had hid somewhere in a fence jamb, he announced to the crowd that through the strength of his medicine and the power of God he was now going

to try to walk on water. By this time he had just about everybody hypnotized. Blest if he didn't tear loose into the water, right spank! He fluttered and floundered about a minute and then stood up with his hands crossed in front of him and praying ~~and~~ carrying on like he was talking straight to God. And he walked right on off where the water was about ten feet deep. And it didn't come up much above calf-leg high. The folks fell down on their knees and shouted and cut up, same as if the Savior had come back. In a minute the doctor was back on the bank and when he struck dry ground he struck it singing. And everybody else joined in with him. And the preachers led in prayer. I don't know how many fresh converts were made. But I know Dave Vance and Green Mumford weren't among them. They stood on the outside of the crowd looking on, waiting. By this time the little Negro was back with a load of bottles, and the doctor started haranguing the crowd again. But sales were slowing down now. No doubt the old glutton had got about all the money present, but he still wasn't satisfied. So he announced he would walk on water even farther, and for everybody to believe in the power of himself and his medicine sanctified. So he hauled off and made another floundering out in the water, got set and walked as before except farther. And that's where he hung himself.

"For while the people looked on, all overpowered with awe, the doctor came to the pitfall prepared for him, even as the scriptures say, except this time it was dug in the water. And down he went like a rock kerchoog and out of sight. Well, to sum the thing up in a word, the old hypocrite nigh drowned before it occurred to anybody to jump in to save him. For he couldn't swim a lick. Then several of the brothers dived in after him, while the women screamed. But not Dave Vance and Green Mumford. They were a stonyhearted pair all right, and they kept whooming about and laughing out loud. And then the folks found the footlog contraption, and so exposed the doctor.

"It looked for a while as if the people would lynch the old devil when they found out the trick he'd played. Dave and Green helped protect him from the wrath of the crowd, but in spite of them he got his britches torn off of him, and his money with them. And he was whipped black and blue before he got loose and struck a lope toward the mountains to the west. The little Negro had already bolted — when he saw his master sink under the water.

"And neither one of of them was ever seen in Little Bethel from that day to this. The folks gave the horse and wagon to poor blind Em Lucas. That helped her some. The medicine didn't."

### *folk practices*

Like folk customs. Practices dealing with health, weather, man's final calling and election on earth.

*folk toys*

Hawk callers, turkey callers, whirligigs, bean shooters, sling shots, shucking pegs, dancers (made from spools), popguns, waterguns, whammy doodles, etc.

*Follow* the river and you'll come to the sea.

Where he leads me I will *follow*.

*Follow the drinking gourd.*

See "drinking gourd."

*Follow the Leader*

A boys' game. This is very much like fox and hounds. A player designated as a leader, usually by a counting out rhyme or drawing straws or a majority decision, is followed by the rest who must imitate his every action. The course often includes hazards, the climbing of walls, walking on fences, jumping over little streams or wading through them, climbing over barriers, crawling under other barriers, etc. I have known some of the daring leaders to run under a mule's belly, or between a horse's legs, or go through a barn lot where maybe a dangerous bull is shut up or is wandering around.

*Follow your nose* is the best way home.

*following* like sheep

*foody*

Useless, over-ornamented.

A *fool* and his money are soon parted.

A *fool* can make money; it takes a wise man to know how to spend it.

A *fool* flaunteth his folly.

As the crackling of fauns under a pot, so is the laughter of a *fool*.

Answer a *fool* according to his folly.

There's no *fool* like an old *fool*.

Send a *fool* to market and a *fool* comes home again.

*fool around with*

Free and easy loving.

*fool-catcher*

Used in derision. "How did the fool-catcher miss you?"

*foolish*

Mentally retarded, often applied to an idiot, "Mrs. Matthews and her foolish Charlie were there in the men's corner, drinking in the sermon like always."



*fool killer*

An imaginary retributive agency or medicine. "The fool killer's about this morning and you'd better watch out."

*Fools'* names are like their faces,  
Always seen in public places.

*Fools* rush in where angels fear to tread.

Experience keeps a dear school, but *fools* will learn in no other.

*fool's hill*

Youthful foolhardiness. "He has to go over fool's hill, let him alone."

*foot*

To walk, to hoof it. "You'll have to foot it."

A going *foot* always gets something if it's only a thorn.

One *foot* in the grave and the other edging up.

Don't hist one *foot* till the other's setting flat.

*foot-and-mouth disease*

Garrulity, over-talkativeness.

*footback*

On foot, as contrasted with horseback.

*foot free*

At liberty, loose and fancy free, without responsibility.

*foot in one's hand*

Hurried, fast moving. "So I took my foot in my hand and I made it over to Grandpa's house and told him what I thought."

*foot log*

A log over a stream placed for crossing. We children attending the old Pleasant Union schoolhouse in Harnett County had to go through a long swamp and across a creek. My father and some other farmers interested in the school had planks sawed and put on little trestles for crossing. We thought this was the finest thing of all, for before that we had been walking on a series of round logs, and they were hard as heck to stay on. Often we'd slip off, and into the cold water we'd go.

*my foot!*

An exclamation of disdain or disbelief.

*put one's best foot forward*

Be on one's best manners, try to make the best impression possible.

*put one's foot in it*

Make a faux pas, do an unintentional or awkward thing, or make a backfiring remark.

*put one's foot in his mouth*

Same as put one's foot in it. "Every time that fellow speaks to a girl he puts his foot in his mouth."

*foot up*

To add up, to total.

*foozle*

To bungle.

*for*

Used for emphasis. "I'm not as old as you think for."

*force*

Manpower, fieldhands, workers. "He has a force of twenty men working in that newground, and he ought to have it soon cleaned out." "I'm gonna quit farming for I ain't got any force (children) to help out anymore."

*forehead band*

A band of cloth once used by ladies in the old days tied tightly around their foreheads to keep wrinkles from appearing.

*foreign parts*

A woman's privates. "I visited foreign parts last night and, Lord God, the wonders I encountered."

*forever*

An intensification of frequently. "I'm forever leaving the electric stove on high."

*Forewarned* is forearmed.

*Forfeits*

A young people's game.

To err is human, to *forgive* divine.

*Forgive* and forget.

*for good and all*

Finally, completely. "Well, at last I paid that bill for good and all."

*forked*

"His tongue's as forked as a 'possum's prick."

*forkedy*

Forked.

*forks*

Fingers.

*forrud*

Forward.

*hold the fort*

Wait a minute, hold up everything for a bit.

*for the birds*

Worthless, untrustworthy.

*for to*

Emphasis. "He had a call for to go to the garden house, but on the way he ran into a clothes line. When he come back, finally, he said, 'Don't make no difference, I wouldn'ta made it nohow.' "

*forty fits*

To be upset, in a dither, disturbed.

*forty 'leventh*

A vague and huge number. "I reckon old Colonel McAllister would be about a forty 'leventh cousin or something."

*forty winks*

A short nap.

*like forty*

Used for emphasis, intensification. "That bone felon hurts like forty."

*forward*

Thriving. "My corn is mighty forward this year."

*fotch*

Past tense of fetch.

*fought* like a cornered rat*four-eyes*

A bespectacled person, was used in reference to Theodore Roosevelt.

*four flusher*

A crook, a pretender, a braggart, an incompetent person posing as competent.

*four-leaf clover*

Always brings good luck.

*four-legged burglar alarm*

A watch dog.

*fox*

To mend a shoe by renewing the cap or the upper leather.

Br'er *Fox* he lay low.

The old *fox* is caught at last.

An old *fox* is hard to catch.

Don't have a *fox* on the jury when the goose is tried.

like setting a *fox* to guard the geese

*Fox and Geese*

A good indoor game, much of the checkers variety. A wooden board or stiff piece of cardboard was marked off in the shape of a large-armed cross, with lines on the cross designating the points where the geese are to be placed. The fox is placed in the middle. There are seventeen geese on the board at the start. The fox in the middle of the board faces the geese. The object is for the geese to hem up the fox so that he cannot move, and his purpose is to catch as many geese as possible until their thinned-out number shows they cannot hem him in. The geese move first. They may be moved along in the direction of any line but only one hole at a time. The fox can jump a goose and take it from the board when, in his turn to move, there is a vacant hole behind a goose to which he can jump.

My brother Hugh and I loved this game to distraction, even playing it in our dreams after a long evening's struggle. He usually won. We used grains of corn for the geese and a button or penny for the fox.

*Fox and the Hen*

See "Chickamy, Chickamy."

*Fox and the Hounds*

A game of chase. The fox, chosen by agreement or by a counting-out rhyme, is given a start, say, of one minute or bit of time agreed on or even a distance of one hundred yards or so (both by estimate), and then the other players, the hounds, give chase. The bounds of the chase are set by certain trees, or other landmarks, and the fox must run within those bounds. He, of course, uses every trick he can think of to elude the hounds, hiding, doubling back in his track, etc. The one who catches him becomes the next fox.

*fox fire*

A phosphorescence. There are many folk tales about fox fire. It has often been identified with that weird creature "Jack-muh-lantern." I've heard also

fearful tales of fox fire in graveyards. A Valley doctor told me once that he had actually seen a sort of fox fire above the grave of a recently buried neighbor of his, and he explained it as being an actual phenomenon due to the gas coming up out of the grave from the decomposing body buried there.

### *foxglove*

A popular ornamental flower with upright white or purple blossoms somewhat resembling fingers in their shape. It is a source of the heart medicine, digitalis, and is sometimes called the digitalis plant. The name, the botanists say, probably comes from folk's glove. It grows in various parts of the world and therefore has various names, such as bloody fingers, dead men's bells, ladies' thimble, etc. It was used in the old days for treating neuralgia, dropsy, asthma, palpitation of the heart and even insanity.

### *fox, goose and corn*

A ferrying puzzle.

A man has to take across a river a fox, a goose and some shelled corn. He can only take one at a time. If he takes the fox, the goose will eat the corn. If he takes the corn, the fox will eat the goose. How does he do it?

He leaves the fox and the corn together and takes the goose over. Leaving the goose, he comes back for the corn and carries that over. He leaves the corn and brings the goose back. Leaving the goose now, he takes the fox over, then comes back for the goose and carries it over.

### *fox squirrel*

The longer reddish squirrel as distinguished from the grey squirrel.

### *fraction*

A fight, a quarrel, a faction.

as *fragile* as a leaf

as *fragrant* as a flower

### *fraidy cat*

A coward, a weak-willed, timid person.

### *frail (flail)*

To beat, to whip unmercifully. "If you children don't behave yourself, I'm going to get them brushbrooms and frail the living daylights out of you."

*Frailty* thy name is woman.

### *fram*

To beat, to pound, to whip. "I framed the tar out'n that bully."

### *francis*

A mulatto.

*“Frankie and Johnnie”*

One of the best known of all American jealousy murder songs.

“Frankie and Johnnie were lovers,  
O Lawdy, how they could love.  
Swore to be true to each other,  
True as the stars above — —  
He was her man, but he done her wrong.”

Johnnie went straying after a gal named Nelly Bly, and Frankie went after  
Johnnie with her old forty-four.

“O roll me over easy,  
O roll me over slow.  
Roll me on my right side, honey,  
For the bullets hurt me so.  
I was your man, and I done you wrong.”

*franzied*

Frenzied.

*franzzy*

Frenzy.

*frazzle*

A sniption, a small amount. “The baby weighed ten pounds and a frazzle  
when it came.”

*worn to a frazzle*

Completely worn out.

*frazzlings*

The remnants, the unravelled bits.

as *freckled* as a guinea egg

*freckle’s difference*

Hardly any difference at all, a small difference. “It don’t make a freckle’s  
difference with me whether you come or not.”

*freckly-faced*

A face marked with freckles.

*free and easy*

Good natured, easy-going, lacking in ambition.

as *free* as a bird

as *free* as the breeze

as *free* as the wind

*free fight*

A fight in which the combatants grab anything they can to attack the opponent or defend themselves.

*free-gratis*

Same as gratis.

*free-handed (hearted)*

Generous.

*free-of-charge*

Without cost.

*a freewheeler*

One who does pretty much as he pleases.

*freewheeling*

Loose-ended, uncontrolled. "Looks like now the whole money system in this country is just freewheeling."

*free, white and twenty-one*

To be on one's own, to be responsible for one's actions, no longer at the beck and call of one's parents.

*freeze*

To stop still, to stand suddenly motionless. "The dog froze on the bird."

*freeze in one's tracks*

Same as above.

*freeze onto*

To take a great fancy to, to cling to or hold fast to in an objectionable and tiresome way.

*freeze out*

To be snubbed.

*Frenchified*

Finicky mannered, precious, over-precise.

*French kiss*

A perfunctory kiss on each cheek. And then there's another definition of the French kiss: a deep sucking one. "Where did you learn to kiss like that," asked the girl. "From siphoning gas," replied her sweetheart.

*French leave*

To leave suddenly on one's own decision, often AWOL.

*Frenchmen*

Tall, spindly tobacco plants of poor or useless quality.

*fresh*

A freshet. "The Cape Fair is up so high on account of the fresh that Uncle Josh ain't running his flat today."

*fresh* as a daisy

*fresh* as a fresh turd

*fresh* as a rose

*fresh* as spring

*fresh* as the flowers in May

*fresh* as the morning dew

*freshen*

To replenish. "Let me freshen your drink."

*freshening*

Said of a cow or other animal whose udder is enlarging in pregnancy.

*freshen up*

To add new touches to one's toilette.

*freshes*

A swamp with different little streams running in it at flood time.

*freshman's bible*

A college or university catalog.

*freshman's trot*

A derisive whistling indulged in by sophomores or upperclassmen in teasing a passing freshman, a practice once common at UNC.

*fresh meat*

A newcomer on death's row.

*'freshments*

Refreshments.

*fresh out of*

Just run out of, a stock of supplies recently exhausted. "I'm fresh out of peppermint candy, son."

*Fret* and fry never shod the mule.

*Fretting* cares makes gray hairs.



*fretty*

Irritable, prone to worry.

*Black Friday*

Execution day in the State prison. Friday the 13th is known as Black Friday. And also Friday the 13th is especially unlucky, according to general folk belief.

*Good Friday*

The Friday before Easter Sunday and believed to be best suited for planting beans and certain other garden vegetables.

*fried*

Executed in the electric chair.

*fried pies*

Little pies turned over and fried in deep fat.

A *friend* in need is a *friend* indeed.

A *friend* is easier lost than found.

A *friend* to everybody is a *friend* to nobody.

A man's best *friend* is his dog.

*to go to see a sick friend*

To make an excuse for not keeping an appointment. "I'm sorry I couldn't be there to meet with you folks, but I had to go and see a sick friend."

as *friendly* as a puppy

as *friendly* as pickpockets at a fair

Old *friends* and old wine are best.

A broken *friendship* may be sortered (soldered) but it will never be sound.

*a frigate in full sail*

A woman all panoplied out in fine clothes.

*frillies*

Women's underclothes.

*frills and furbelows*

Excessive airs, ornaments, flashy attire.

*frilly*

Fancily dressed in lace and ribbons.

*fringe tree*

The flowering ash, known also as old-man's-beard, a sweet-scented shrub common to North Carolina woods. Tea made from the bark was good for the yawns and gapes. Also it was used as a wound cleanser.

as *frisky* as a colt

*friz*

Past tense of freeze. "The ground friz hard as arn, and I was up at daybreak ready to kill my hogs."

*frizzle*

To curl or crisp as in cooking or singeing. Also to make a thing draggle-tailed or frizzly.

Two little Negro boys in Cumberland County had an old curly-headed wayward dog that took up at their cabin, and they named the old creature Frizzle. Their father was a big-bellied loud preacher, and the story went that he was given a pounding by his congregation — a pounding being the custom where the members of the congregation or neighbors would bring at least a pound of supplies — coffee, sugar, flour, potatoes, or something at least a pound in weight to present to the pastor. One good-hearted member of the church gave the preacher a sheep, and the preacher told his little wife and mother of the two boys, Paul and Silas, to fatten this sheep up good while he was traveling around doing the Lord's work and laboring hard in the vineyard — praise be! — because when Association time came — the time when there was a big gathering of church delegates from other congregations meeting at his church — he wanted to have this sheep fattened up and be able to feed his visiting consecrated brethren with good mutton. See "pounding."

*frog*

The bicep muscle, used to swell out in boys' competition. "I can make a bigger frog than you can." Sometimes one would say mouse instead of frog.

To stick or poke, especially with the fingers, much the same as goose.

There is one common superstition about frogs and that is that if they make water on you, you are sure to have warts. And, of course, there are all sorts of cures for warts.

A tiny little boy was asking his Valley mother one day where babies came from, and she told him that they sprouted like seeds in the garden and they came up — which to me was a better account than the old Valley common folk answer, "The doctor finds them in old hollow stumps." Nothing would do but the little boy had to plant himself some seeds to see if he could get some babies of his own. So she, indulging him, let him plant some beans,

and he packed the dirt on them and put a board over the ground to keep it damp. And during the night he dreamed about his babies that might come. The next morning early he was up to see what had happened. He pulled the plank off, and there sat a little toad frog. He ran yelling into the house to his mother in tears and frantic, "Mama, mama, I've already got a baby, and he's so ugly!"

That part of a middle-busting plough to which the steel sweeps are fastened.

Kill a *frog*, and your cow will go dry.

A *bullfrog* knows more about rain than the almanac.

*frog-eater*

A Frenchman.

*Frog in the Middle*

A game of hiding and hunting.

Children form a ring around a member chosen by agreement or a counting-out rhyme and, with eyes closed, sing the following words, two, sometimes three times:

"Frog in the middle  
Can't get out.  
Take a stick  
And knock him out."

While they are singing, the frog hides. When they open their eyes, they call out, "Froggy's hid, we must find him." When he is found, he chases his pursuers. But he cannot catch them while they are squatting. Three squats are allowed. The game continues until all are caught, and the last child caught becomes Froggy for the next go-round.

When *frogs* croak, winter's broke.

*frog spit*

White frothy exudation from plants, weeds, etc.

*frog-sticker*

A large pocketknife.

*frogstool*

Toadstool, mushroom.

*frog-strangler*

A heavy summer rain, a gulley-washer.

*"Frog Went A-Courting"*

A popular child's song. One of the most popular children's songs of all times,

known in one form or another in most parts of the world. The version we children sang went as follows:

“Frog went a-courting, he did ride,  
Unh-hunh—  
Frog went a-courting, he did ride,  
Sword and pistol by his side—  
Unh-hunh.

“Frog went down to Miss Mousie’s hall,  
Unh-hunh—  
Frog went down to Miss Mousie’s hall,  
First he’d knock and then he’d call—  
Unh-hunh.

“Took Miss Mousie on his knee,  
Unh-hunh—  
Took Miss Mousie on his knee,  
Said ‘Miss Mousie, will you marry me?’  
‘Uhn-hunh.

“Where will the wedding supper be?  
Unh-hunh—  
Where will the wedding supper be?  
Way down yonder in a hollow tree—  
Uhn-hunh.

“What will the wedding supper be?  
Unh-hunh—  
What will the wedding supper be?  
A piece of bread and a cup of tea.  
Unh-hunh.”

*front*

A prideful pretense.

*front name*

The Christian or given name.

*a front-porch farmer*

An indolent person who likes to sit on his front porch, usually in a rocking chair, and look out at the fields. “Yes, take it from me, Jesse’s too much of a front-porch farmer ever to prosper.”

*all front and no back*

A show-off, a phony.

*frost*

To sharpen the front and the hind parts (calks) of a horse or mule shoe.

*frost smoke*

A mist rising from the earth on a cold morning.

*killing frost*

A white heavy frost, usually followed by warming weather, then ending in rain and then turning cold again, with another killing frost to follow.

*frounce*

Flounce.

The ripest *fruit* falls first.

The tree that brings forth corrupt *fruit* is cut down.

*Fruit Basket*

A play-party game. All the players but one who is "It" are seated — all chairs being filled. "It" assigns each person a fruit for his or her name — lemon, orange, grape, etc. — giving the same fruit name to more than one player. When, for instance, he calls out "peaches!" the peach players exchange seats. In the exchange "It" tries to secure one of the peach seats. If he succeeds, then the losing peach player becomes "It" and the former "It" becomes a peach. On the call "Fruit Basket" all exchange seats, and the one who fails to secure a seat must become "It."

*fruitful vine*

A woman of rich procreative powers.

Stolen *fruits* are always sweetest.

Bring forth therefore *fruits* meet for repentance.

By their *fruits* ye shall know them.

*fruity*

Very rich and strong smelling, bad body odor, said of one who is in need of a bath.

*frumpish*

Disordered, disheveled, topsy-turvy.

*frush*

Fresh.

*fry*

To die in the electric chair or to burn in hell-fire as is foretold for unrepentant sinners.

*fry in one's own grease*

To be in a situation or condition due to one's own misbehavior or lack of judgment.

*fry me for a pan of eels!*

An exclamation of reaction expressing exaggerated feelings.

*small fry*

Small children, the younger ones.

*out of the frying pan into the fire*

To exchange one tough situation for another equally tough, to give up what one has in hopes of something better, but finding it the same or worse.

*frying-sized biddy*

A young girl.

*fuck around*

To waste time, to trifle about.

*fucked, friendless and up shit creek*

In a lonely and deserted condition, down with the mulligrubs.

*daughter fuckers*

Incesters.

*mother fucking son of a bitch*

An intense defamatory description.

*Fuck you!*

A term of rough derision.

*fudge*

In a marble game to fudge is to gain distance closer to the marble to be shot at by sliding or pushing one's hand nearer the ring. An opposing player can prevent this by crying out "venture fudging" or "venture fudge."

*full*

To come full. "The moon fulls on the 18th, and then I'll kill my hogs."

*full as a tick*

He that is *full* of himself is empty.

*full-faced*

With a round face. "He's a full-faced man, and old as he is he don't show any wrinkles yet."

*full of beans*

A windy and garrulous person.

*full of crap*

Of a like condition to being full of beans but worse.

*full of guts*

Brave, bold.

*full of one's self*

Egotistical, spoiled.

*full of prunes*

Much the same as full of beans, and suspiciously inaccurate.

*full speed ahead*

To go forward with all energy and purpose.

*full swing (tilt)*

In full force, with great energy, well under way. "The game was in full swing when we got there."

*full to the ears (gills)*

Gorged, satiated with food or drink.

*full up*

Quite full.

*fumadiddles*

Foolish acts. Also loud or fancy clothes. "That washing machine drummer was at church dressed out in his fumadiddles to a fare-you-well."

*a barrel of fun*

An extremely hilarious time, often said of an individual who is exceptionally entertaining.

*fundament*

The anus.

*funeral*

One's duty, concern, responsibility. Also ill luck. "Well, don't come to me crying, it's your funeral."

A burial sermon. "Mr. Johnson preached the funeral at Chalybeate last Sunday."

*funk*

A strong smell or stench. "Open the windows and let all this funk out."

*funky butt*

A dirty and stinking posterior, so I was told by Jim Faulkner. We boys used to sing a semi-lewd song that went well with the rhythm of the chopping hoe:

“When I make ten dollars a day.  
Stinky butt, funky butt,  
Take it away.  
I don’t want it no more.”

*funning*

Pretending.

as *funny* as a barrel of monkeys

as *funny* as riding sidesaddle on a sow

*funny business*

Underhand dealings, suspicious transaction, tricky goings on.

*funny face*

False face (mask). Also a term of endearment. “Come here, funny face, and kiss me.”

*funny house*

Insane asylum.

*feel funny*

To feel strange, sick, nauseated.

*too funny for words*

Outlandish, silly, full of giggles and merriment.

*fur*

Pubic hair.

Far.

*furce*

Fuss. “You children quit making such a furce.”

*further*

Further, farther. “I can’t go no further.”

*furdest*

Furthest, farthest.

*make the fur fly*

To engage in a fist fight, a clawing and scratching contest. Also excessively active.

*furmity*

An old-time popular dish made of new wheat boiled in milk and flavored with sugar, raisins, nutmeg, and liquor.

It was Sunday, and Malcolm Fowler, Phillips Russell and I were sitting



with Uncle Waverly Lassiter on his front porch talking of the old times. We "historians" had come over to visit him, hoping we could get a story or two out of him. Malcolm had told us beforehand that he had "stacks of stories in him." Uncle Waverly knew what we'd come for, and presently he began obliging us — in a somewhat grudging way he did.

"Don't reckon any you men ever heard of a fellow named Harry Sauls?" he said.

We shook our heads.

"Well, this Harry loved a dish we called furmity — a concoction made of all sorts of ingredients and boiled together till it comes out into a sort of creamy custard and mighty smooth and easy to slide down a man's gullet. I used to like it some myself, but you never hear much about it in these days. It's gone out of fashion.

"As I say, Harry Sauls really loved the stuff. Folks all called him Lord Harry Sauls — why I don't know, but they did. I guess it was because he was the lord of all the eating men, far and near, and from what I've heard of him he was just that. I never knowed him. He died before my time. But my daddy and other folks around here knowed him. The truth is he didn't weigh but about a hundred pounds or less, so they said, but eat, good lord amercy! I've heard my daddy say that he's seen him devour a dozen biscuits, a dozen eggs, ten cups of coffee and finish off with half a small pork ham. Yessir, he could out eat old Broadhuss hisself."

Uncle Waverly stopped, and we urged him to continue. Presently he did.

"Harry had a wife named Tom — Tom Sauls. She weighed about 220 pounds and was a big, fat, jolly woman and loved little old Lord Harry better than life itself. She would set him on her lap and play with him and fondle him and make love to him and kiss him like a baby doll. And she waited on him hand and foot and would always give him anything he wanted.

"One winter," my daddy said, "when they killed hogs and Tom was drying up the lard and had a whole pot of it boiling away, Lord Harry just stood around there, his mouth watering. 'Tom,' he said, 'that's the purtiest looking grease there in that there pot that I've ever seen, boiling away and all bubbling and laughing-like at itself!'

"Behave yourself, Harry," she said. But he kept insisting and finally she said she would give him a little bit of the grease. She went in the house and got a peck of sweet yam potatoes she'd cooked up and brought 'em out in a sack and set it down, and she dipped him up a quart of that clear lard grease. And there he set and he et every one of them potatoes, dipping 'em in that grease until he'd devoured the grease too. And then he was still so hungry she give him another quart more of grease to sort of finish off with. Or maybe it was a half-gallon for all I know. Ha, ha.

"Yes sir, he was an eating man, Harry Sauls was. Now, Mr. Green, you're a-grinning, but that's the way my daddy told it.

“I remember seeing all around in the country flowers and things Lord Harry made, tulips and jonquils — made every single one of ’em out of iron. He was a blacksmith, you know. You might not think such a little fellow as that could be a blacksmith, but he was, and he was a good one. And could make anything from a firestock to a log wagon. He was a real artist, that’s what he was, and he liked to do all kinds of things. I ain’t seen any of his handwork though, in a long time. I guess it’s all been scattered and lost, even the log wagon’s rotted down. And he had him a nice house up the road a ways, too, and one room he had all paneled in soft poplar boarding. You might make note of that — but the house is rotted and gone long ago — there where he lived.

“But the real story of Lord Harry’s life I can’t tell you. But I can tell you a bit about him and the furmity. I can’t tell it right, for it makes my head ache so. I got to have about two fingers of Highland Scotch liquor, or corn will do sometime, before I can really get into it. Yessir, telling stories makes my head ache.

“Now, dang it, you just keep on insisting, but I can’t tell it right, I tell you. I can only give you the height of it and maybe you can sort of get an idea of what happened. That’s the best I can do for you.

“Well, this furmity stuff they say is about the best eating that ever was. Lord Harry used to say it was food fit for a god. And every spring Tom would make him up a bait of this furmity. You have to catch the wheat when it’s sort of at the milk stage and you boil the hulls off of it in milk and then you put in your sugar and raisins and egg yolks and cinnamon and any kind of custard stuff you want to, and you season it mighty strong with good Highland Scotch liquor. And if you can’t get the scotch, then get you some benedictine, and if you can’t get that, then I guess you’ll have to wind up with good corn liquor. And you put plenty of it in there.

“Well, Tom made him up a half-bushel or so of it, and Harry set down and et every bit of it. You see I ain’t going to tell you the real story because it has to be done with all kinds of going back and forth of what Harry said as he stood around waiting and what Tom said whilst she was a-cooking of it. I can’t tell you that ’cause it makes my head ache so bad. But I’m just giving you sort of what happened since you keep on insisting so danged hard. And Mr. Green there, he just won’t quit. He’s like one of them Cumberland County boar chinchies, he seizes on you and there he is. But I ain’t going to tell it to him — I just ain’t. I’ll tell Mr. Fowler sometime when he’s up this way and got plenty of time. Or Mr. Russell there.

“But, as I said, this is the height of it, this is sort of what happened. After Lord Harry et up that whole half-bushel or bushel of furmity and went to bed you might expect he’d have trouble. And he did. He begun to swell. The next morning Tom went hotfooting it off for Dr. Wyche. Dr. Wyche come and looked at him. Harry, they say, was stuck out worse than

any big balloon, his tummy was bigger'n his whole hundred-pound body. It stuck up so he couldn't see over it, even to see his feet or the door. And there he lay.

"Dr. Wyche looked at him. And Harry looked up and whimpered, 'Well, doctor, this time it looks like I'm set to cross over the deep icy waters. Pray for me!'

"Dr. Wyche said, 'Hell, Harry, you ought to a-crossed the deep icy waters long ago if eating would kill a man. And it's too late to pray.' So he examined him and he said he would do the best he could for him, but he misdoubted anything would help.

"Now, sometime before this Harry had paneled the room in which he lay with pretty yellow poplar planking, the way I said. He had shaved it and planed it smooth, and rubbed it, and he had it looking awful nice. And he was mighty proud of how his house looked. As I say, he was a kind of an artist fellow, you know, doing all kinds of things and flowers in iron, and he loved flowers about the house too, real flowers. And he liked a nice house.

"Dr. Wyche after studying a while says, 'Tom, go out and get me the washboard.'

" 'What for, doctor?' says Tom.

" 'You go get it,' said Dr. Wyche. 'I'll do the best I can for him. May kill him. But he's got to have relief, either in death or in life.'

"So Tom brought in the washboard.

" 'Pull up your nightshirt, Harry,' said Dr. Wyche, 'we don't want to bust that.' So they got his nightshirt up and over that swole stomach — I reckon they had to slit the shirt after all to get it over — and there he lay with that stomach stuck up like a great balloon. 'Now, Tom,' he said, 'stand over there next to the wall and take a good running start and I want you to jump and land right on this washboard whilst I hold it level.' Well, Tom was a mighty big woman, as I said, but she was soople-like on her feet. 'I'm afraid to do it, Doc,' she said.

" 'I say it may kill him,' said the doc. 'but he's going to die anyhow and we got to try to save him, damn his soul!'

"So Tom hauled off and took a running start, and here she come and landed with her fat behind right smack on the washboard, squashing Harry down same as a pile-driver had smashed him.

"Well, sir, they say it sounded like a cannon when Harry went off. You've heard of these eighteen-pounders, them guns. Well, you might say that that day Harry was a hundred-pounder going off. And, sir, he just ruined the whole side of his paneled wall. The charge he shot made a circle, they said about ten feet across. And I'm here to tell you that later as a boy I've been up there and seen it, and once I remember picking some of them hard-dry wheat grains out of that nice paneling with the point of my knife blade.

Yes, sir, it was just same's if a cannon had gone off and them grains of wheat stuck in the paneling and specked it all up.

"Someday I'll tell you the story with all the trimmings. It's a long tale, but it makes my head ache and I can't tell you now. But I might say Harry got well after that and lived a long time, and you couldn't get him to touch a bit of that furnity again, no sir. That's what my daddy said."

*to furnish*

To supply with food and clothing on a tenant farm basis. I can remember how my father used to talk to prospective tenants — we had a couple of little tenant houses on our small farm — and it always was the question of furnishing the tenant, and then the sad business in the fall of settling up, and the tenant farmer usually finding he had less than he thought he had. My father was scrupulously honest and even went out of his way to favor the tenant. "You'll have to furnish me, Mr. Green, if I live on your land. I didn't make a thing last year at the Schofield place."

*fur piece*

A long distance.

Hell hath no *fury* like a woman scorned.

makes more *fuss* than an old hen with one biddy

*fuss and feathers*

An overactive, bustling, fussy person busy about trifling matters and acting as if they were of prime importance.

*fuss around*

To make a stir, to bustle about.

*fuss box (fuss-budget, fuss pot)*

An irritable, quarrelsome person.

*fussicate*

To stir about, bustle about, also growl and grumble.

*fussikin around*

Fussing around.

as *fussy* as a wet (setting) hen

*fust*

First. "It's the one that gits there the fustest with the mostest."

*fusty*

Musty.

*future life*

A folk belief held by millions and millions of people in this world and the majority of people in the Valley — that when one dies, he will enter into eternal bliss, if his life has been good, and into eternal woe if it has been bad. This belief seems to be common at a certain level of culture to all races and times of people — paradise or hell, the two extremes. Of all the visions of paradise that I have ever read about, that of the Algonquin Indians on the eastern coast of the United States is the most beautiful.

The Christian view of heaven to me seems strange and barbaric, an unbelievable one. I have been taught, and my friends in the Valley have been taught, that heaven is presided over by a God of justice, and on one side of Him is the Holy Ghost and on the other his son Jesus Christ the Savior, and the people after they die come up before the throne of God to be judged. Those who have been evil are sent down to hell to burn there forevermore in a fire seven times hotter than any fire on earth, and those who have been good enter into the New Jerusalem and are given a harp to play and sing and wings to fly around with, and they have nothing to do but to enjoy themselves.

I heard about a man who died and went into the afterlife, and there he was given a beautiful room with ladies waiting on him, beautiful girls they were, and anything he wished for he had. Food, drink, wine, music, girls — anything — and immediately there it was. Finally, after a few days he began to get tired of this, because he could not wish for anything that it didn't instantly come to him. So, finally, he asked a long-faced neighbor of his, "Say, is this the way it's to be forevermore, to have everything you want? I didn't know heaven was like this. I knew it was supposed to be perfect, but this is too perfect. It's already beginning to get boring." Then his neighbor looked at him and said, "Where do you think you are?"

*fuzz*

The beginning beard on an adolescent face. George Butts, a tenant on our land for a while, used to cut hair early Sunday morning, or shave people. I'll never forget how embarrassed I was when he cut my hair one morning and then lathered my face suddenly and started to shave me. I was about fifteen years old. "Let me shave you," he said, "get this fuzz off and the first thing you know you'll start growing beards worse than a turkey gobbler."

*fuzzy*

Tipsy.

When *fuzzy worms* (caterpillars, etc.) are plentiful, a bad winter will follow.

# G

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*gift of gab*

Easy loquacity.

*gabble*

Silly talk and plenty of it.

*gable-end*

The head, the boss. "Yes sir, Glenn Hancock is the gable-end of the lumber business in Chatham County."

*Gabriel's hounds*

The hellhounds that foretell disaster as they run across the sky.

*on the gad*

To be restless, also traveling about a great deal. "No wonder Miss Lucy had a nervous breakdown — she's always on the gad."

*gadder*

Gather.

*gad-hook*

A long pole with an iron hook or gad at the end, used especially for moving floating logs into place for fastening in a timber raft.

*gadren*

Gathering.

*ga'dung*

God dang.

*Gaelic language*

The native language spoken by the early Scots who came into the Valley in the 18th century. They continued to speak Gaelic for a long while, and in 1756 the Reverend Hugh McAden, who came as a wandering preacher

among them, said they “scarcely knew one word of English.” Gradually English took over, but I remember, when I was a boy, an old farmer here and there could still manage bits of Gaelic. A few years ago the Reverend James MacKenzie, showing his devotion to the “auld tongue,” became proficient enough in it to deliver a Gaelic sermon now and then at old Barbecue Church where he was pastor — this the church where the Scotch heroine Flora MacDonald and her family worshipped in 1774-75.

### *gaggle*

To cackle.

### *gagroot*

Pukeweed, Indian tobacco.

What shall it profit a man if he *gain* the whole world and lose his own soul?

No *gains*

Without pains.

### *gall*

A goiter. “She’s got a bad gall on her neck.”

A dead spot in a field where corn or any crop will not grow. “There’s a great big gall in my dunghill, and I can’t even raise peas in it.”

An internal organ in superstitious folk medicine.

Near our home in Harnett County lived an herb doctor by the name of Cicero East. The first time I ever saw Cicero he came to a little country store run by my brother and myself when we were boys. He showed up riding a little runty mule, his long legs hanging barefooted almost down to the ground and the top of his bushy louse-ridden hair set with a peaked, holey, old felt hat. He had come for a plug of Apple tobacco.

I went away to school and later heard that Cicero had set himself up as a doctor there below Angier on Black River. People, as time passed, began to speak of him as Doctor East. You might not believe it, but it is the truth that folks flocked to him by the dozens, even hundreds, seeking cures for all sorts of aches and pains and sufferings, both internal and external.

My friend Edward Green, a man fifty years old and of reasonable intelligence, went to Doctor East for treatment. He had been bothered by stomach trouble. Dr. East gave him some medicine — a bottle of some sort of yellow concoction — and Edward said it helped him. At that time I was in the throes of collecting folklore material, as I still am, and I went to Edward to find out just what the herb doctor had done for him. Edward was enthusiastic. “Yes, sir, Paul,” he said, “folks like you can laugh at old Cicero but he’s smart. He’s a mighty hard man to find, I’ll tell you that. He’s got a house way back in there close to the river and the crookedest road you

have ever travelled leading to his house. When I got there he had several patients ahead of me — in fact there were two or three Fords and a horse and buggy tied — I mean the horse was tied — out in front of his little house. When my turn come, he give me a thorough examination. He had a long trumpet-like hollow thing, same as a guano bugle, and he put it on my stomach and listened to it with his ear at the small end of it and then he got me to open my mouth wide. Then he put the big end of the bugle over my mouth and looked down my gullet. All of a sudden he jumped back. ‘Lord God, Mr. Green,’ he said, ‘you’re in bad trouble!’ It scared me but then he made me feel better right off. ‘But I can fix you up. No doubt of that.’ He looked down inside me again and said, ‘Ah-ha I see it now. It’s your gall, Mr. Green, your gall. It’s big as a goose egg, all swole up and pressing against your innards and that’s how come you’ve got all that pain.’ ‘Can you help me, doctor?’ I said. ‘Didn’t I say I could help you.’ Lord, it was a comfort to hear him talk like that and he said, ‘I got the very medicine to ’swage you down. Of course, sometime I have to purge the galls out of people, but I don’t think yours needs purging.’ So it was I got me a bottle of medicine and I’ve been taking it and my pain is purty nigh gone. It only cost a dollar and a half and he told me to come back for a second bottle if I needed it. And let me tell you, Paul, he showed me a whole shelf loaded with half-gallon Mason jars with alcohol in them, and in them jars was all kinds of galls and pieces of rotten flesh, cancers, big tumors, and things like that he had purged out of people and never a knife he laid on them, never a knife at all. Yes sir, folks like you can laugh at Doctor Cicero East, but I don’t laugh. No, sir.”

*gall and wormwood*

Bitterness, shame.

*gall apple*

An oak apple.

*gall-berries*

A bitter berry that grows on bushes usually in bogs or swamps. Same as inkberry.

*Galled* horses cannot endure the comb.

*gallery*

The public. “He plays to the gallery.”

*galley sleeve*

A compositor in a printing shop.

*galling (girling)*

Courting. “Sion’s been going galling every night this week, and he’s hollow-



eyed as a sick coon.”

### *gallinipper*

A huge mosquito, its size usually depending on the imagination of the person describing it.

We boys used to hear many stories about these pests. I remember one told about a couple of Irishmen — and in those days the Irish were usually the butt of folk jokes. It seems that Pat and Mike — and the Irishmen were always Pat and Mike, and if there was only one of them, it was Pat — had joined a labor gang trying to help Col. A.S. MacNeill canalize the Cape Fear River there a few miles below Lillington. Early in the first night they were badly bothered by mosquitos and they moved several times, wrapping themselves up in their blankets. Finally Pat looked out and saw the whole swamp winking with little lights — lights of fireflies. “Faith me Christ, Mike,” said Pat, “let’s leave out of here. Them dom gallinippers are coming after us now with lanterns!” And so they fled the job.

### *galloping consumption*

A quick-acting virulent form of the disease.

When I was a boy, a Negro settlement was formed on the east side of the Cape Fear River opposite Lillington. Here farm workers, day laborers, and hirelings for all work congregated. Galloping consumption broke out in the settlement and in a year or two had carried off more than half of the settlers. The rest scattered. Wesley Armstrong and his wife, Meta, who had once lived on our land, perished there. Old Neill Monroe and his family survived. He told me the reason was he had the right medicine for the disease — hard corn liquor in which lightwood knot sawdust was stirred, in the proportion of three spoonfuls of dust to a pint of liquor. “A good dram of it every morning,” he said, “done the work.” When I asked him why he didn’t make known the cure to his suffering neighbors, he winked and said, “Tell you true, Cap’n, liquor was a little sca’ce to be had.”

### *galloping pneumonia*

A virulent form of the disease that carries the sick one off in a hurry. Young Neill Arch MacNeill was supposed to have died of this, at least his old father, the Colonel, said he did. People knew differently, but out of respect to the Colonel and the family, they kept their counsel — most of them did.

On one of my youthful forays in search of Valley folklore and stories, I called by to see my old friend, Mr. Mac, the miller. Several neighbors were gathered around the big walnut tree that shaded the front of the mill, the while they waited for their corn to be ground. They were talking of a sad occurrence over in town the day before. As was my custom I made some note of what they said.

Young Neill Arch MacNeill, one of the most popular young men in

the neighborhood, had died rather suddenly of pneumonia in his father's house, they were saying. The funeral was to be held that afternoon in Old Tirzah churchyard. They spoke of the pity of it all — this young man with a university education and the promise of a bright future in the law practice of his father, Colonel MacNeill, to be so suddenly cut off in the bloom of his early days. The discussion not only showed sympathy for the family's tragedy but a speculation also as to the exact nature of this cutting off.

"I misdoubt it were pneumonia at all," said Lammy O'Quinn from where he leant against his wagon body, whetting his lean hungry knife on the steel wagon-wheel rim.

"It might be and it might not be," old Daryl MacCormack commented quietly from where he sat on a horse block turning a corn cob quietly in his hand as if it might give him some reassuring opinion upon the subject.

"Sudden? I'll say so," said Russ Jones from his squatting position at the root of the tree. "Why only day before yestiddy I saw young Neill Arch coming out of Mangum's drugstore over there in town as spry as a gander, and he had a box of candy or something under his arm. A great big box."

Here Sasse Myers, the local cow doctor and pig trimmer, let out a chuckle and gazed about him with a meaningful wink. He was standing on the opposite side of Lammy O'Quinn and whetting a still larger knife on the steel rim as if in preparation for a vast surgical onslaught upon all and sundry. "I bet you if you go over to a certain house there in town you'll find some of that candy right now if it's not done et up by a sweet pretty mouth."

"They do say that woman loves candy," Lammy spoke up.

"An' that ain't all she loves," said Russ.

"Ain't it the truth!" declared Sasse. And putting away his knife he pulled out a long flat adder-headed needle and began threading it with a piece of twine.

"It's all-fired sad and shocking, it is," said Lammy.

"He's dead and that's the size of it," murmured old Daryl. "Talking one way or another won't help it."

Here Mr. Mac came out of the mill and told them their meal was finished and he was done with grinding for the day.

"What's your opinion about young Neill Arch, Mr. Mac?" Sasse inquired, now looping the twine in an oval collar around the needle stuck in his jacket, as if to be ready for any sewing emergency or need.

"Well," Mr. Mac said gravely, "a long time ago my grandmammy used to say there's only one way of coming into the world but a million ways of going out. Neill Arch took his own way out."

"And what is to be will be," said old Daryl, as he rose creakily from the horse block. "The Scriptures spoke it long before any of us made our biddy peep into this world."

"But it's mighty hard on the Colonel," said Lammy.

"Yes, and it would be harder if by people's talking a scandal was started," said Mr. Mac pointedly.

"Right, right," said Sassle, "and we all agree with the report, don't we, folkses, that pneumonia was what carried him off, and galloping pneumonia at that?"

One or two voices said they agreed and one or two heads nodded the same.

When the neighbors had gone off in different directions home with their meal, I helped Mr. Mac sack up his tollings and then we went out and sat in the breeze under the walnut tree. He bit off a piece of his usual Sweet Flag and settled himself in his old rocking chair, chewing away with little goatlike workings of his chin.

"Looks like rain," he said, "them thunderheads there in the west."

"Yes, it does."

"Are you going to Neill Arch's funeral?"

"No, I'm not," I said. "There 'll be a big crowd standing and gaping around, and crowds bother me. How about you?"

"No, I won't go either. We'll just sit here and talk."

For a good while he said nothing, sitting there chewing on his Sweet Flag and gazing out across the heat-filled fields. I waited patiently, hoping he would get back to the subject of young Neill Arch or maybe dig up from his remembrance a story of old times. Presently he spoke out.

"Take this very walnut tree," he said. "Nothing better than walnut juice for curing all sorts of skin diseases. That is, if you can stand the sting of it. My mammy used to doctor me when I had ringworm or tetter, and I'm here to tell you it would make me shout and call on the Lord. But it cured me, every time it did. Now take that red oak tree right out there in the edge of the woods. There's nothing better for man or beast at times than the inner red oak bark boiled into a brew. It's good for chickens, too. I keep strips of the bark in the watering trough for my chickens all the time. It makes 'em lay better, keeps 'em toned up. And black draught is good too. That's a vegetable compound taken from mother earth's fields and hedges. I use it every now and then when I get to feeling sluggish. Have you ever tried it?"

"No, I never have."

"Well, you ought to. You can get it in town at the drugstore. That's one good thing they sell. My mother used to give it to us children. It's awful stuff to the taste but it sure does the work. And another thing we children used to take was sassafras tea. The Indians, they said, liked that too — and pennyroyal tea. In one of my old account books I've got a whole list of herbs and folk remedies set down. Maybe several hundred. Some of them I got from an old herb woman down near Fayetteville who's been doing all kinds of cures. They say she can cure cancers and tumors with a kind of plaster

made of the herbs she gets in the fields and woods.”

“I’d like to go down and see her sometime,” I said.

“You can do that. Her name’s Zua Smith. I told you about her once. You’ll be able to get a mess of stuff for your plays and stories from her. Well, yes, black draught is good. And yesterday morning I went over to the drugstore in town to get me some, for I’d been feeling a little under the weather. And now I’ll tell you what was told me and, since you’re all the time studying human nature and writing about it, this maybe will come in handy for your use someday. But if you do use it you ought to change the names. Well, as I said, I went into the drugstore to get me some black draught. And while Mr. Mangum, the druggist, was wrapping it up he asked me had I heard the news in town that morning about young Neill Arch. I said I hadn’t. Then he leant over the counter and looked around him and spoke kind of secretlike to me and said, ‘Why, old Colonel MacNeill’s boy, Neill Arch, was cut to death last night. Come here, let me show you.’ You know he’s a kind of frank-speaking man and he took me to the door and pointed out some damp dark sawdust blobs here and there on the sidewalk and leading around the corner. ‘There’s his very blood there in that sawdust,’ he said. ‘I sprinkled it to cover it. Uhm. I wouldn’t tell everybody about it but I’ll tell you.’ ”

“‘Who in the world done it?’ I asked.”

“‘Ah, that’s a mystery to some folks maybe but not to me,’ he said. ‘And I don’t mind telling you who I think done it. You know Joe McFayden, don’t you?’ I told him I did. ‘He’s a traveling salesman goes around a lot. His wife lives here in town. You know her?’ ‘I’ve seen her,’ I said. And I remembered her and some of the stories I’d heard about her. ‘Have you ever seen her?’ ”

“I don’t think so, Mr. Mac,” I said.

“If you had you’d remember her. A pretty thing and built the way men like and knows it. So according to what I gathered from Mr. Mangum she had been making up to young Neill Arch in her husband’s absence. And maybe that’s where the box of candy come in. Young Neill Arch had bought it for her as perhaps he had bought her many another trinket. You know how women are about trinkets.”

“I’ve not had much experience in that sort of thing,” I said.

“You don’t have to have experience,” he retorted, “young or not young. You kind of know that to start with. The Bible’s full of it. Any book is full of it. Any neighborhood you might live in shows it, shows how women are seduced and carried away by little trinkets, gifts and doodads handed out from the fingers of men. So it happened that Joe McFayden, according to Mr. Mangum, came home two nights ago and found young Neill Arch with his wife in what they call a compromising position in bed, and so he out with his knife and slashed the young man to the quick. Neill Arch got

away and staggered home to his father's house to die. The blood drops along the sidewalk showed the path he traveled, forward but never to travel back. He made it by the drugstore and tried to get help but couldn't for it was deep in the night and my store was closed.

"Did you know Neill Arch?" Mr. Mac asked.

"I used to see him some," I replied. "A fine-looking young man."

"That's what Josie Belle McFayden thought all right," and he let out one of his grim little chuckles.

"Now what will happen to her and her husband — if it was murder?"

"Nothing will happen to her," he replied. "It will all be hushed up and things will go on as before. People know about it and they'll talk about it among themselves. But it won't come out in the open and get into the papers. And the main reason is maybe because of old Colonel Neill Arch himself. He will keep it hushed up. Right after Mr. Mangum had talked to me about it I left the drugstore and started over to buy me a strip of meat at the market, and I met old Colonel Neill himself. You know what a grand looking figure of a man he is."

"Yes, I do."

"Thick drooping mustache, flower in his buttonhole, vest and gold chain and long-tailed coat. And the tobacco, yes, his tobacco. He was chewing it just as usual and his mustache was all stained with it. For forty years I've heard him make his roaring speeches there in the courthouse and at picnics and rallies in the cause of navigation on the Cape Fear, North Carolina's charge at Gettysburg, and how he himself fought the full three hot July days there on nothing but a canteen of buttermilk. In fact his life has mainly been one of talk and running for Congress, and he was too young to fight in the Civil War. And he'll never be elected to Congress and he'll die old and discouraged, no doubt. But people respect him, and he's got influence. He always puts on a good front just as he did yesterday morning. He stopped me on the sidewalk, held up his hand all breezy like. 'Morning, Mac,' he said to me. 'Morning, Colonel,' I said. 'I'm coming over to get some of that fine waterground meal,' he said. 'I'll bring you a peck next time I come to town, Colonel.' I said. 'That's a man,' he said, 'and how's politics with you?' 'About the same.' 'Guess you heard about the sorrow that's come to me.' 'Yes, it's bad, Colonel.' 'Yes, too bad,' he said. 'My boy Neill Arch died this morning, Mac. Died of galloping pneumonia. Yes, galloping pneumonia carried him off.' And he looked me straight in the face with his bright blue eyes with never a trace of a lie in 'em, all clear and innocent as a girl's.

" 'I'm sorry,' I mumbled, 'real sorry, Colonel.'

" 'But as the Lord says in his blessed book,' he said, 'death took him in the night like a thief that falls upon his victim unawares.' And his voice took on a loud note just as if he were getting ready to make a speech. Then

he caught himself and said all quietlike, 'Poor little Neill Arch.' With that he pulled out his big stained handkerchief, blew his nose, and wiped away his tears. He smoothed back his mustache, fixed the flower in his buttonhole, and tipped his hat. 'You are my friend,' he said. 'Come to the funeral, Mac,' 'Goodbye, Colonel,' I said, and he went on down the sidewalk, his heavy stomach stuck out in front of him all proud and stifflike as if he had just been nominated for Congress and not shaded and shamed down to death. So there won't be anything said about the murder. They are burying young Neill Arch there in Tirzah graveyard with his ancestors, the proud dead Scotsmen of old. And all will be hushed up, and finally things will go on just the same with the turning world, the rising and the setting sun and the stars up high looking down on it all like they've looked for millions of years and like they will look for millions more. And it's right that it is so. It's right, Paul."

"Maybe so, Mr. Mac. Yes, maybe so," I said.

*gallows*

A large horizontal pole usually resting in the forks or crotches of leaning young tree trunks on which the slaughtered hogs were hung for gutting and cleaning. We usually used dogwood trees for these poles.

*gallows walk*

A slow unwilling walk. A walk much like a man moving to his own hanging.

*one gallus man*

A tenant farmer, a redneck, a peckerwood, an ignoramus, one of the rural great unwashed.

He who *gambles* picks his own pockets.

*gambrel*

A stick usually pointed at each end which is inserted behind the heel sinews of a slaughtered hog so that it can be hung up on the gallows with head down for gutting and cleaning. We used to make the gambrels in Harnett County out of tough hickory wood.

*game*

Bold, plucky. "I'm game to try anything once."

as *game* as a rooster

stung at his own *game*

The *game* is up.

*game fish*

A fish that fights gamely against its taking.

*gamey*

Bold, sexy.

*gander*

A married man.

*Gander Hall*

A fine 19th century estate, now perished, which got its name from a well-known joke on its owner, Captain James McIlhenny of a highly respected Valley family.

The unusually high prices being paid for goose feathers led Captain McIlhenny to buy a flock of geese which he intended to use for breeding. In anticipation of large profits, he traveled to the up country for the purchase and was careful in selecting the geese in person and accepted only the white birds. Then he set to waiting for the laying season — and he waited. Finally he consulted a “goose expert” and learned to his distress that his geese were all ganders. From then on the estate was called Gander Hall.

*gander hill*

A term referring to a house in which a woman is pregnant and the husband has to play the part of the waiting and expectant gander.

*gander month*

The month in which a man's wife is confined following the baby's delivery. Also refers to the month of March.

*gander party*

A gathering of males, same as stag party, opposite of hen party.

*ga'nt*

Thin, gaunt.

*ga'nt-gutted*

Lean, thin.

A *gap* in the ax shows in the chips.

*gapes* or *gaps*

Yawnings.

To live out of the *garden* is to live at home.

*garden greens*

Collards, cabbage, lettuce, rape and other green vegetables.

*garden house*

A privy.

*garden peas*

Early peas usually planted in the Valley in January.

*garden sass (also garden truck)*

Vegetables.

*“The Murder of James A. Garfield”*

Although the murder of President Garfield occurred in 1881, and this ballad came out a few years after, it was still being sung round and about in Harnett County when I was a boy. I learned a few verses of it from Mr. James Faulkner, a man who helped on our farm and who entranced us Green children many an hour with his tales and musings and piping-voiced songs.

“Come, all you Christian people,  
Wherever you may be,  
And likewise pay attention  
To these few words from me.  
For the murder of James A. Garfield  
I am condemned to die.  
It’s on the thirtieth day of June  
Upon the scaffold high.

“My name is Charles Guiteau,  
That name I’ll never deny,  
And I leave my aged parents  
In sorrow for to die.  
How little did they think  
While in my youthful bloom  
I’d be taken to the scaffold  
To meet my fatal doom.”

*garlic eater*

An Italian.

Who putteth new cloth upon an old *garment*?

Cut your *garment* according to your cloth.

*gas*

Ineffectual talk, windy talk.

*gas chamber*

A room in the state prison in Raleigh where criminals are put to death — a hangover from other barbarous days. It is an outmoded form of punishment, but the politicians and the orthodox church members, especially the Catholics, have not yet decided that this is so. It has been used over the years in the South, like the electric chair, to put to death the poorer class



of criminals, and especially for two crimes: murder and rape. And it has been well proved to my mind that many an innocent and helpless Negro man has died for the crime of rape which he didn't commit. See "Southern womanhood."

Over the years I have visited many condemned men on Death Row in Raleigh and have heard their pitiful and self-mutilating stories, and in each case I have been more and more convinced of the terrible wrong the state legally inflicts on such of its ruined citizens. One only has to read some of the letters written by these condemned ones just before they died to have the truth driven quakingly home as to the vengeful wrong. Here are a few from my collection with the names changed, of course, because of living relatives.

Dear Friends:

As you know I have been here a long time, and if I had not found God I don't know how I could have stood it. But thanks and glory be to God that I did find Him and accepted his Son as my saviour about a year ago. As I have served Him the best I could, when I come here I was burdened with sin and saw that I was lost and that no one could help me but God. I got down on my knees one night and asked him to forgive me of my sins. I felt like I was not worthy to call on him for help but God heard my prayer and saved me. And it sure is a wonderful feeling to know that you have someone to give you the comfort and cheer that you need. So you see, friends, you may be in prison and shut off from the world but God is always near and want to help you. You all know that song, Who at my door is knocking. And when he knocks let him in for he is the only real or true friend that you have. So, friends, take him and never let him go. He never will let you go. You have heard me testify many times for my Lord. So I will say So long. I hope to meet all of you in better land someday where the circle will not be broken if you will take Jesus as your Savior.

Your friend,  
Carl Emmet

\* \* \*

Dear Rev. Johnson:

I appreciate so very much your kind letter of sympathy of March 19. So many acts of kindness and sympathy have been extended me during this sad hour, some of them old friends and some friends that I do not even know. Sometimes we do not fully appreciate our friends until sorrow and trouble overtake us.

I know that you meant much to Carl, taking such an interest in him and as an inspiration to him to live the Christian way. Sometimes these things happen to us and we are bewildered and wonder why our cross is so hard

to bear but trusting in Christ I know that someday I'll understand.

His funeral was one of the sweetest I ever attended. We used the songs that he sang at the last and also the scriptures that he had written to me to read. The church was filled to overflowing and it was a perfect sunny spring day. The floral offerings were lovely.

Again I thank you for every kindness, every word of encouragement and prayer offered in Carl's and my behalf.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Ella Emmet

\* \* \*

My dear Mother:

Well, Mom, this is the last letter I am writting you. Keep it auntil you die whitch I hope you will never die. But listen, I still love you wherever you my be. I hope you are alive and my God bless you and my sweet wife. I hope you will meat in heaven. May God be with you and Pauline. I know I been unfaithful to my wife to and I disobade to my mother. But I ask God to forgive me for sin. I no I did rounq and had be rounq but I know my poor mother did the very best she could to rase me without a father but after all every curnor there were trouble look me in my face but now I will give the would up and my God be with me wherever I stop and I hope that God will open the heart of my mother and take away all her sorrow and stand within my wife's eyes and hope that she will give glory to God name and she shall not perish but have eternal life. Just trust him, Pauline, and I no he will stand by. Please don't wait until sick are trouble and darkness come upon you. Meet him tonight at your bedside wherever you and Mother my be. Please remember these words because God will answer it. He is the only one. So this is all and the end. But Mary Pauline and Mary Manly we will meet some sweet day in the sweet land of liberty. Close with tears.

Monroe Manly

\* \* \*

Dear children:

Your daddy died in the gas chamber.

I want to say that I love you all and hate to part from you but the life I led sinning against Jesus he took me from you, your mother and grandmother.

So, children, please remember this — be good and think about the way your daddy died for being disobedient to God's laws. Please go to church and take Jesus for your savior, read your Bible and Jesus will make you happy and bless you the longer you live. Please mind your mother.

If you live for Jesus you will see your daddy again.

Daddy loves you but God loves him better.

Daddy won't say any more now only take Jesus for your friend.

Sid Gurney

\* \* \*

Dear Friend —

I am telling the world goodbye and this is just how I feel about leaving this world behind.

I have good news to bring you, that is why I am writing. I am going to take a trip in that old Gospel ship and go sailing through the air. Oh, I can scarcely wait. I know I won't be late, for I'll spend my time in prayer. And when my ship comes in I'll leave this world of sin and go sailing through the air. I'm going far beyond the sky. I'm going to shout and sing until the heavens ring when I bid this world goodbye. I'm going to take a ride right by my Savior's side and I will not have to care, I'll leave my burden here, with every sigh and tear and go sailing through the air far past the sun and moon I shall be traveling soon.

Wasted days are now behind me. My evening sun is sinking fast. Every moment brings me nearer to the end. I will hurry on home to my Jesus.

I do hope that everyone will feel as good as I do as his time grows close to his grave.

May God bless every one and save his soul.

These are the last words of

Benny Thomas

\* \* \*

Dear Friends,

This letter is written just forty-five minutes before I go to execution.

Well, I want to tell everybody something. Yesterday I was not ready to go but this morning about seven-fifteen o'clock Jesus saved my soul and I am ready to go to be with Jesus. Friends, my advice to all is to get Jesus in your heart. And I hope to meet you all in heaven. Boys, I want you all to write and tell my mother and wife that I was ready to go and I ask you all to write and tell them for me and tell them all I said to meet me in heaven.

So, boys, this is my last request on this earth but there is a home in heaven for me. It says so in St. John 14 chapter.

Cliff

\* \* \*

Dear Christian Friends:

I am on my way to meet my Lord. I really have enjoy all you have done for me since my stay here. You have helped me to become a child of God.

Now my work on earth is done, my life crown has been won and I will be at rest with him above. I am leaving you all praying that you who are left will get a better break than those of us who left you.

But as you no we all have to die sometime. Man can take our life but he can't do our soul any harm. Now my friends, stop worrying about your life and get your soul ready to meet God.

Always remember when heaven pull the curtain down and pin them a star God will always be your friend no matter where you are. Please for my sake take him now while you still have time.

I won't say good bye for whenever you (leave) this world I feel deep down inside of me that we will meet again some day.

So, all my friends who don't no God, learn him now and he will give you rest.

Well, it ain't mush to say but I am gone to rest with my Savior and I won't say I will be glad I won't see you all up there. I have learnt a lot about God since here and now I can tell you how I feel. I feel godd till I couldn't wate till the time come for me to go. Now I am gone to join the saints in glory where sory no more truble can (indecipherable). So, boys, pray to make heven your home and less join the band together where we can sing prases forevermore with God. Things here on earth ain't no good if you want to be saved. Don't look at the world and be lost. Look at God and be saved.

So long

Billy Jackson

\* \* \*

Friends—

Well, fellows, the time grows near as you know. Everybody must die sometime. I feel much better since Rev. Johnson baptized me yesterday. Deep down in my hart I feel that I am saved and I want to thank you all for all you all have done for me and Rev. J. Fellows, I did learn the twenty-third Psalm. It means a lot to me. I know God is with me. I have called upon him and he has heard my cry. I will go to him and rest in the kingdom of God forever. In every way you all may go never forget God. To be with God is to have eternal life. Without him you lose. God so loved the world that whosoever believed in him shouldn't perish but have everlasting life.

From

Carson Black

P.S. You know they killed the Son of God and they will me also. I have told the truth and believe if James C. Brook had told the truth they would not kill me. But I have nothing in my hart agenst anyone and hope to rest in heaven with God. Be of good cheer and let not your hart be troubled. Hope to meet you all in heven.

\* \* \*

Rev. Johnson, my dear friend in Christ:

Just a few lines this beautiful Friday morning to say how much comfort you were to me. I thank you so much for the weekly magazines and the many comforting conversations we had together. May God bless you in the years

to come. Now a few words to my fellow prisoners of Christ. Boys, I want to leave this word with you all to the white and colored or whatever race you may be, that is, I pray you all may enjoy another chance in life, that you can go back home to your wife and children or your dear old mother or sweethearts or loved ones. Brothers my heart cries out for your precious soles. I do hope in some way you may realize your mistakes and go straight. I have many friends in the backyard and I pray you boys will take this letter seriously because the writer only has at this time one hour to live in this old world. Why? Because I must pay with my life for crimes committed in sin. Yes, I am leaving a darling wife and five sweet little children... Boys, I really enjoyed my stay on earth but I can say I was never happy because I didn't know the pleasure of Christian ways. I have been more content since I came to death row than I ever was before because I found God. And I am going home this morning. Boys, when you face your loved ones for the last time it is not very pleasant. Well, Rev. Johnson, I am a little tired now and I am going to slip off in a little while to a good long rest in the arms of my Jesus. So may God bless you and our fellow countrymen in the time to come.

Sincerely your friend in Jesus,  
Danny Ross

\* \* \*

Dearest Mother:

I am writing this letter from the very depths of my heart. There have been times I know dear Mother, when, because of my actions, you often wondered did I really love you. But this night as I look forward to being with my loving Savior, I want to say, like I never said before, I love you, and my only regret is that I did not tell you long ago of my great devotion for you.

I will be going to be with God, but I shall be waiting for you and our other loved ones, to come up there to be together forever more. Our parting will not be long, so don't cry or grieve for me. Just think we will be together with our Lord for eternity.

I will never forget the day I got in trouble, because you told me that if I didn't stop and listen to you I would get into trouble. But I didn't listen to you, and I am very sorry for not heeding your sound words of advice. And I remember very well how you, the good mother you are, stuck with me through everything, even after some others turned their backs on me. I forgive Father for what he said about me at the time I got into trouble. And I have been praying that he may accept God and spend the rest of his life serving the Lord.

I hope and pray that you will be able to make arrangements with Maggie Lene to have Velma Ray, my darling daughter, to visit and stay occasionally with you at your home. Because I know your love and good advice will be a great help to her as she grows older.

As to my trial I promised to tell you the truth. Of course the evidence was against me, but I did not kill the man. I believe that my lawyer could have done more if he had dug into the facts of the case, instead of talking so much about my "so-called confession" and discrimination.

I forgive Annie Ruth for what she did to me. I believe no other mother could not raise her child as good as you raised me. All my mistakes I made myself. You always warned me about my bad ways. When I finally found out the truth you always had told me, alas, it was too late.

When you get this letter, I'll be with my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And you can rest assured that I am SAVED from all my sins. The State of North Carolina is taking the life of an innocent boy.

All my love,  
Lloyd Ray

\* \* \*

Last Statement of Lloyd Ray  
February 11, 1953

This is the last statement made by a 19-year-old condemned negro boy. I am sorry this is my last statement but there is nothing I can do about it now. I want to plead with every man, woman, boy and girl not to get in trouble. I am sorry, so sorry I got in trouble because I am just about to go to my death. I have eleven sisters, no brothers and one daughter of my own. It is a shame how I messed up my life. I have nothing against anyone. But I have never felt good these three years on death row except Sunday and every night from 6 to 7 o'clock; that is when five condemned colored boys hold services. All five of us boys got the bad news about the same time.

I have not seen my father since I have been in trouble; all my sisters turned me down, all except my mother. So I had a hard life all the way. I have never been to school but had to work so my sisters could go to school. But when I got in trouble they turned me down; I feel so badly about it. I truly hope and pray everybody will stay out of trouble. I do not hate anyone but I cannot say I love anyone but my mother and daughter.

Well, if nothing happens before February 27, my poor short life will be all over in this world. But I am going to live by my Lord Jesus Christ because I am saved from all my sins. I do not have any close friends in this world; I am alone. On June 5, 1949, I gave myself to the good Lord Jesus and in Him I found a friend who will be my friend until I die on February 27, if nothing happens.

I can say this much: my lawyer did what he could. Also Warden Roberts did a lot for us condemned boys on death row. I want everybody to know that my soul is saved. I love my sweet mother, I am her only son and she certainly loves me. I wish I could say that about my father but I can't. In

my closing statement I want to say, "God be with you all until we meet again.  
I am saved but I do not want to die."

Lloyd Ray

\* \* \*

*step on the gas*

To hurry, to drive fast.

*turn on the gas*

To get to the point, to start some important action.

*gassing*

Idle talk.

*give one the gate*

To fire, to dismiss.

*gather*

Know, comprehend, understand. "Here you are and I can't gather why you've come."

*Gather* ye rosebuds while ye may.

He who would *gather* roses must not fear the thorns.

*gathering*

A swelling such as a boil.

*gathering goats' feathers*

To fool time away, to idle about, find excuses for not working. "The trouble about writing is you have to gather so many goats' feathers before you get started."

*gay* as a bird

*gay* as a lark

*gay blade*

A merry fellow

*gaysome*

Happy, frolicsome.

*gearing*

Gears.

*gee*

To agree, to get along well, to fit. "Their ideas just don't gee."

Let the *geese* beware when the fox preaches.

If *geese* cackle a lot, it is a sign of rain.

*geese are swans*

An exaggerated value of a thing. "All his geese are swans in his thinking."

*the old woman's picking her geese*

Snowing.

*gee whillikins!*

A mild expletive.

*geezer*

Face, nose. "Wham, and he hit him right in the geezer."

*gem*

A beloved one.

Full many a *gem* of purest ray serene  
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear.

*Gemini!*

An exclamation, from Castor and Pollux, the twin constellation in the sky.

*General Green*

Pestiferous grass, especially crabgrass. "From the looks of that field General Green has won the victory."

*generality*

The majority. "The generality will never agree on religious matters."

*generation*

A multitude. "My goodness alive, there's a whole generation there at the church meeting."

One *generation* goeth and another *generation* cometh, but the earth abideth forever.

*genny-wine*

Genuine.

as *gentle* as a dove

as *gentle* as a kitten

as *gentle* as a lamb

*gentlemen!*

An interjection. "Gentlemen, did that dog evermore go away from there when that turpentine was poured in his rear end!"



*Geordie*

Diminutive of George.

*By George!*

Exclamation.

*Let George do it.*

An excuse for not acting, referring to a vague agency, a dodge from work.

*Georgia buggy*

A wheelbarrow, a chain gang term.

*Georgie Porgie*, pudding and pie  
Kissed the girls and made them cry.  
When the boys came out to play,  
Georgie Porgie ran away.  
(A teasing rhyme.)

*get*

To move in a hurry.

Understand. "I don't get it."

*get a move on*

Hurry.

*get away with*

To embarrass, to hack, to discombobulate. "When I told him I knew about his nigger baby, it really got away with him. Yea, man."

*get a word in edgewise*

To push forward in a conversation.

*get down to brass tacks (cases)*

To come to the point, to deal directly with the business at hand.

*get going*

Start up, to begin. "Let's get going with the prayer meeting, folks."

*get gone*

To vamoose, to disappear.

*get hold of*

Understand, get the attention of. "Try to get hold of the waiter and ask about the dessert."

*get in dutch with*

To fall into disfavor.

*get in one's hair*

To be in the way, to irritate, to bother.

*get it in the neck*

To be dealt roughly with, be hurt, be hard put to it.

*Get lost!*

A command to one to move off, leave, get out of one's sight.

*Get me?*

Do you understand?

*get next to*

Affect adversely, irritate. "That Nixon's lying gets next to me."

Also, to develop an advantageous acquaintance. "Joe Palmer's road got paved after he got next to the governor."

*get off to a bad start*

To begin unluckily or badly.

*get off to a flying start*

To begin well, swiftly.

*get on*

To thrive, to prosper. "He knows that pennies make dollars — and so that's how he gets on."

*get on a high horse*

Get upset, lose one's temper.

*get one's back up*

To be irritated, to be filled with resentment.

*get one's bristles up*

Same as above.

*get one's goat*

To become annoyed, embarrassed.

*get one up on*

To get the advantage over.

*get on one's nerves*

To irritate, to trouble.

*get-out*

A descriptive term for emphasis. "He drove that old chevy faster than all get-out."

*One gets as good as one sends.*

Tit for tat, a quality of treatment.

*get set*

To arrange to start, be ready to go.

*get sore*

Become angry, humiliated.

*get straight*

To become solvent, to be out of debt, solve a complication.

*get the bacon*

Succeed in one's efforts.

*get the brush-off*

To be ignored, dismissed, fired.

*get the bugs out*

Clear up weaknesses, correct an error.

*get the bulge on*

To gain the advantage of.

*get the drop on*

To have the advantage.

*get the gate*

To be fired, dismissed, a more vivid statement of "get the brush-off."

*get the lowdown on*

Find some facts, usually derogatory ones, about a person.

*get the mitten*

To be fired, dismissed, same as "brush-off" and "gate."

*get the wind up*

To be frightened, terrified.

*get to first base*

Succeed. "Charlie has asked that pretty new coed for a date several times but he can't get to first base."

*get under one's skin*

Irritate, confuse.

*get up and get*

Energy, industry.

*get up on one's hind legs*

React strongly, increase one's anger.

*get up on the wrong side of the bed*

To be in a surly mood, feel unlucky, to be down in the dumps, the dismals.

*Get used to a thing* when young, you'll stand it when you're old.

*Get while the getting's good.*

*get wind of*

To hear about, to have a rumor of.

*ghost*

A spirit of a dead person appearing on earth again, such as Hamlet's father's ghost. Often referred to as ha'nt.

Ghost stories are universally popular and how often we children shivered with delight as we listened to one. The more pitiful or scary, the better — such as the following. I've heard several versions of this story, all differing in particulars but agreeing on the fact of the ha'nt. This one I got from an old local historian, Jim Fallon. I allowed for his imagination.

"Well, a long time ago when the Yankees were fighting with the Southern folk," said old Jim, as we sat by his fire one night, "General Sherman and his soldiers ravaged through the country burning and destroying things. They crossed the Cape Fear at Fayetteville which they burnt and went all around seizing up provisions and victuals — what they could find. They come on up the river into our neighborhood — some of 'em did. And a company of 'em put up in Squire Barclay's big grove. The Squire had a great big house too, but they said they'd put up their tents outdoors and sleep in them like always if he didn't mind. They seemed mighty polite, and he said go right ahead. And I reckon they'd a-done it anyhow, whether or why, for I've always heard them Yankee soldiers were mighty rough, and certain they were, as I'll tell you.

"Now the Squire and his wife had a little boy, and he was much took with the soldiers and the rifles and clamping swords and bayonets and he kept brushing around and asking questions and telling 'em no doubt about what old Sandy Claus had brung him for Christmas. The Squire done what he could for the soldiers when supertime come. He had his niggers bring out what beef and sweet potatoes he could furnish and some cider and peach brandy — not much but some. Them soldiers et and drunk and felt purty good no doubt and thought the Southerners maybe were not so bad after all. Later some of 'em poking about found a big cask of scuppernong wine in the barn where the Squire had it hid away in the shucks. They went after that hot and heavy, and soon they were feeling more than fine. They were getting drunk.

“Now the Squire and his wife had done gone to sleep in the big house, and the little boy was supposed to be asleep too. The captain of the soldiers had told the Squire that he would see that nothing was disturbed and he and his men would take care of everything. I reckon after all the Yankees were not so bad, though I heard old Miz Nancy Demming say once that her daddy saw one of 'em squatted behind his barn, his britches down and him doing his natural business and he had a long tail like the devil hisself. And I've heard other old folks say that some of 'em had hoofs too.

“Well, that little boy couldn't sleep for thinking about the soldiers and their blue coats and their swo'ds and everything, and so he laid in his little bed listening to the happenings down in the grove, some talking and singing maybe. And when everybody else in the house was quiet, he got up and crooped out and went down there. And there set the soldiers all full of liquor and a-jawing with one another.

“And some of 'em was cussing now and about to fight. When the boy come up to 'em they all stopped and looked at him, and one of them said, 'Sonny, you better be in bed.' Another'n said, 'Let him set up — 'twon't hurt him.' Then they all got to asking questions and bragging on him and said, 'Your father's a big rich man, he must have horses and plenty of silver and things buried in the ground.'

“‘If Father did have horses and such hid away I wouldn't tell you,’ the boy said. ‘What's that?’ said the big captain of a soldier who was drunk with the rest of 'em by this time. ‘I wouldn't tell you,’ said the boy. ‘Well, maybe he has,’ said the captain, ‘and was lying when he told us everything's been sent to the Confederate Army — horses, money, and everything.’ ‘I ain't going to tell you,’ said the boy, ‘and you better quit calling my father a liar.’ And then they got to fooling with him, half joking and half serious. ‘If you don't tell us, we might hang you up high as Haman.’ Of course they didn't mean it — they was just joking and picking at him. But he begun to cry and you know how it is sometimes when anybody cries. It's liable to make you meaner than you was, if you're set on pestering of 'em. And that's the way it was with them. They didn't give way to feeling sorry for him. ‘Shut up,’ they said, and then they begun to give him some minny balls and one of 'em give him a piece of new money with a picture on it, and he hushed his crying. They begun to pick at him again, asking him about all them horses and where that silver and money was buried, 'cause they had already got the idea from the way he acted that that little boy knowed something. And he might for all I know.

“Of course, they didn't mean no harm maybe but they were getting good drunk by this time. And you know how it is when folks get drunk and a long ways from home — from their women-folks at home — they are just like as not to get powerful mean. And then the big captain soldier said, ‘By God, we'll hang the little rascal on that limb if he don't tell.’ And another

said, 'By God, we will.' But you know — that little fellow wouldn't tell a word, nary'n. And one of the soldiers tied a handkerchief around his little mouth so he couldn't squeal much. Lord, I wished I had been off in the barn with a rifle or up on a rooftop some'r's.

"There was a big 'simmon tree there in the grove with the limbs spread out and a little swing on it where the little boy used to swing. And one of the soldiers took his sword and cut the rope in two. Then they tied it around the little boy under the armpits and hung him up. 'Now,' they said, 'you going to tell us about them horses and where that there money's hid,' and the little boy kept shaking his head. 'You gonna tell,' they said. And he kept shaking his head. Golly, that little young'un was a stout Trojas man all right. Then they started swinging him back and forth, way here and way there until his head would almost touch the limbs of the red oaks beyond. And he couldn't make nary a sound 'cause they had his mouth covered up with that handkerchief, and his hands tied. When he would swing by him, the big soldier would say, 'You gonna tell?' And the little boy would shake his head. Then the big soldier got bull mad, and he shouted out so loud that he roused the Squire up in his bed where he slept. 'You gonna tell me? I ask you for the last time!' And the little boy shook his head, and then as he swung back towards him, that there soldier pulled out his sword and run it through the little boy's stomach and killed him — unh!

"Well, the Squire and his wife had come out on the porch, 'cause they had heard the loud shouting. They went rushing down towards the soldiers, the two of 'em in their white nightgowns and throwing up their hands. And when they seen the little boy hanging there by the firelight, his head bent over like Jesus on the cross and blood drip-dropping from him to the ground, they both went wild and run at the soldiers clawing and scratching like cats. And the soldiers killed both of 'em, so 'twas said. And the big soldier stood there drunk swinging the little boy, all the time swinging him back and forth, and all of a sudden he gave the little body such a swing that it swung high up and lodged in the fork of the 'simmon tree.

"Then when they'd done so much damage — killed the boy and Squire and his wife, 'cause they was all so drunk, they set fire to the house. And the niggers run all out of their cabins into the fields, hollering and screaming while the house burned down. The soldiers shot some of the niggers just to see them fall, so 'twas said. Then they packed up their stuff, saddled their horses and got away from there as fast as they could, and they never more did come back.

"Later the white folks cleaned up that grove and made a field of it, but they didn't touch that 'simmon tree. You know how it is, they leave 'simmon trees down in fields, the way it is in my field down there. And one night when I was about yearling size, I went with my daddy coon-hunting over on the hill there. We had four dogs named Rang, Gouge, Buster and Bo-

Peep, and they were the best coon dogs that ever there was.

"Well, we hadn't been out hunting more'n a few minutes when we up and struck a hot track, and they run up and down the swamps — 'Yow-yow-yow,' as hard as life would let 'em. Then out on the hills and back again, they'd come. There was something quare about it, 'cause a coon don't usually run like that. He sticks straight in the swamp. Then the dogs struck a trail out of the swamp again — 'Yow-yow-yow,' up the hill, across the field toward where the old Barclay house had been, and all of a sudden the racket stopped. 'What do you reckon's happened now?' I said, and my daddy said they must have ketched him. Then he said they couldn't a-ketched him, and if the coon had gone up the tree they couldn't have clambd the tree to get at him there.

"Whilst we stood in the edge of the field a-talking it over, here come the dogs back as hard as life would let 'em run. And they got quite clost up to us and whined and whimpered. 'That ain't no coon,' said my daddy. 'What is it?' I said. And he didn't know he said, but it weren't no coon. And we'd try him again, he said.

"Now them dogs was well trained, and when my daddy spoke, they knowed what to do. Everybody did, when he spoke. 'Get on there, Rang, get on, Gouge, you, Buster and you, Bo-Peep.' And he set 'em off again — 'yow, yow, yow.' They run the trail on across the old field and towards where the old house had been and where that 'simmon tree stood up plain in the moonlight. Purty soon there they come back lickity-lick, lickity-lick. And they croped up around and hugged up close to our legs, whimpering and a-whining. 'It ain't no coon,' my daddy says. 'What is it?' I say. 'You know what it is?' he says. And I say I don't. And he says, 'It's a ha'nt — if what I heard as a boy is so, but I ain't never seen a ha'nt in my life, and maybe tonight's a good time to see one.' Of course he was half joking-like, for he really didn't believe all he'd heard about the old Barclay place, and I didn't neither — little as I was.

"Now my daddy weren't a-scared of nothing dead or alive. So he says, 'We're going to see. Here, Rang, here Buster, and we started out acrost the fields. But you know them dogs wouldn't run nary another step. They come slipping behind, and every once in a while they'd let out a pitiful wheeah-wheeah sound. Purty soon we come up to that old 'simmon tree and there in the moonlight you could see something a-setting in it. Great God, something bigger'n a 'possum was a-setting in it. There weren't no bears in the country, not even no wolves, and I begun to feel funny. 'Come on,' said my daddy, and he went on up with me behind — and Rang and Gouge and Buster and Bo-Peep all in a row.

"Well, we come a little closer and there, bless God, up in the 'simmon tree shining in the moonlight was that little boy or something that looked like a boy.

"I stood froze in my tracks. But my daddy sure had a craw full o'grit, and he said he was going to climb that 'simmon tree and get that little boy or whatever it was, and if it was flesh and blood he'd take him home and raise him. I begged him not to try, but he did. And he climbed on up that 'simmon tree and got right close to where that critter was sitting. And then it run out along the limb to the clean tip of it and hung there by one hand like a 'possum, and my daddy shook the limb so hard that it fell off way down to the ground and hit the ground running — and away it went as hard as its little legs could carry it toward the graveyard back of where the old house has been. But the dogs didn't go after him, no sir. They set right there and whined and whined. And when my daddy come down, he was white as a sheet. 'What's the matter?' I said. 'Come on,' he said, 'let's get away from here.'" Both of us and the dogs left as hard as life would let us. And my daddy said that little boy or whatever it was had breathed in his face.

"Other people seen him in that 'simmon tree too, and it got so nobody would go nigh that place. The briar-bushes growed up about the tree, and the field got full of sassafras scrubs, and the last time I was around there it was full of pines and young sweetgums and new dogwoods. And there'll never more be a plow stuck in it till the end of time. That's what I reckon."

*ghost of a chance*

A very slim chance indeed. "Richard Nixon hasn't got a ghost of a chance of being elected president."

*gibble-gabble*

Senseless chatter.

*Gibraltar*

An image of strength and durability.

*giddy-gabbing*

Gossiping.

*giddy-gadding about*

A flitting around from place to place, without purpose, silly wandering.

*Giddy giddy gout,*

Your shirttail's out

Giddy giddy gin,

Your shirttail's in.

(A teasing rhyme.)

*giddy head*

A foolish, silly person.

The *gift* without the giver is bare.



*gift horse*

A suspicious donation or gift.

Never look a *gift horse* in the mouth.

*gift marks*

The marks on the upper part of fingernails which are supposed to denote special talents or gifts.

Beware of Greeks bearing *gifts*.

*gig*

A spear for gigging fish. We boys used to make our gigs out of old umbrella ribs, and we would sometimes make ourselves a wooden bow and use the umbrella rib as an arrow, and so shoot fish in the water. Our takings were always very small.

*giggle soup (water)*

Liquor.

*gill o'er the ground (or creeping Charlie)*

A species of pestiferous ground ivy.

*gills*

Jaws.

*gimlet-eyed*

Small-eyed, suspicious looking.

*gi'n*

Given.

*best girl*

A sweetheart.

*git up and git*

Get up and get.

*give*

To yield. "Push hard on that post and it'll give."

*Give* advice to all, but be security for none.

*Give* at first, asking what you safely can.

'Tis certain gain to help an honest man.

It's more blessed to *give* than to receive.

*don't give a good goddamn*

A braggadocio expletive phrase.

*give a hand*

To aid, assist. "Come, give me a hand with these groceries."

*give a little and take a little*

To compromise, to solve difficulties by diplomacy.

*dead giveaway*

An obvious trick or dodge.

*give down*

To age, to grow old. "Mis' Alice has give down the most in the last year."

*give down the country*

Bawl out, scold. "I give her down the country for her scandalous behavior."

*Give him an inch* and he'll take an ell.

*Give him but rope enough* and he'll hang himself.

*give him out*

Cease to expect him.

*give in*

To yield, to surrender.

*give lip*

Berate, speak especially disrespectfully.

*give me five.*

Shake hands.

*Give me liberty* or give me death.

To everyone that hath it shall be *given*, and from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath.

To him that hath shall be *given*.

*give out*

To end. "The road gives out just over that hill there."

To announce.

Depleted supply. "My old Ford made a gulp, and there I was squat in the middle of things with my gas give out."

To fail. "My eyes give out when I read a lot of fine print."

*Give the devil his due.*

*give the glad hand*

To welcome warmly.

*give the go-by*

To ignore, snub.

*Give thy thought no tongue.*

*Give the gun*

To open the throttle, to start away at full speed.

Don't *give up* the ship.

*Giving to the poor* is lending to the Lord.

*gizzard*

Manhood, stamina, bravery. "That fellow's got a stout gizzard, I'll tell you that."

*stick in one's gizzard (crawl)*

Anything offensive, bad news, an insult.

*glad eye*

A come on look, especially from a woman to a man or vice versa.

*glad-handing*

Obnoxiously affectionate welcome. Officious and overdone greeting.

*glass arm*

Refers to a pitcher whose pitching arm has gone bad on him, especially as to speed.

People who live in *glass houses* shouldn't throw stones.

*gleason*

A man who likes to see whores naked, especially see them walking around in a room while he sits and takes his eyes full. This term was told to me by a convict in the state penitentiary.

*glim*

Glimmer. "No, there's not a glim of hope for him, the cancer's too far gone."

A faint bit of light. "As soon as we see the glim of dawn, we are ready to start."

*glim of light*

Daybreak.

*douse the glim*

Put out the light.

*glitters* like stars

as *gloomy* as a haunted house

as *gloomy* as night

as *gloomy* as the grave

*glory!*

An exclamation.

The *glory* that was Greece  
And the grandeur that was Rome.

*glory hole*

A woman's cunt.

*glory to God!*

An exclamation.

*in one's glory*

In pride or high hopes, extremely happy.

as *glossy* as silk

A clean *glove* can hide a dirty hand.

*glut*

The wooden wedge used to split logs after they have been cracked by a steel wedge. We used dry dogwood.

*go*

An agreement. "Is it a go or not?"

To imitate. "He can go exactly like a wild turkey's call."

To intend. "I didn't go to hurt you."

Spirit, fire, energy. "That horse has got a lot of go in him."

The fashion, the popular thing. "Mini-skirts are all the go now."

*from the word go*

From the start, from the very beginning.

*go-ahead*

Energy, drive. "He's got plenty of go-ahead, believe you me."

*to go all out*

To try one's best.

*a go and come girl*

One proficient in sexual know-how.

*go around*

Serve everyone present. "I was mighty thankful there was enough vittles

to go around.”

*go around* your elbow to get to your thumb

*goat*

A barrel over which a chain gang prisoner would be held while he was beaten.

Patience. “She always could get my goat.”

*gob*

A sailor.

*go back home and come again*

Try a different way, tell a different story.

*gobble-de-gook (garble-de-gook)*

Nonsense.

*gobble gut*

A glutton.

*gobbler*

A fizzle, a faux pas.

*go-by*

A snubbing.

*God*

The Supreme Being. The omnipotent infinite spirit. The creator of all that is. All religions have their Supreme Being. The American Indians worshipped the Great Spirit. The Greeks had their Zeus, however humanized he was. The Persians have their Omnipotent One, their infinite creator, Ahura Mazda (Ormazd), the god of light, with his opposite Ahriman, similar to our Lucifer or Satan. The Hindus have Brahm or Brahma, the everlasting spirit, the Essence of all that is. They believe in a trinity too, similar to our Father, Son and Holy Ghost — Brahm, Vishnu, and Siva, except that Siva is both the evil or destructive one and at the same time the reproductive and restorative power.

*God* created man in his own image.

*God* can't cook breakfast with a snowball.

*God* helps those who help themselves.

*God* is love.

*God* is no respecter of persons.

*God* knows but he won't tell.

*God* loveth a cheerful giver.

*God* made the country, man made the town.

*God* sees all.

*God* tempers the storm to the shorn lamb.

*God* will bring thee into judgment.

I am the Lord thy *God* and a jealous God.

All things are possible with *God*.

You cannot serve *God* and mammon.

The heavens declare the glory of *God* and the firmament showeth his handiwork.

What *God* hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy *God* in vain.

If *God* is for us, who can be against us.

The kingdom of *God* is within you.

*God a-massy!*

God have mercy, an expletive.

*“God Be With You”*

This used to be a popular hymn in my Harnett County neighborhood, especially at Buie’s Creek Academy. Professor James Archibald Campbell, the founder of the Academy, which later became Campbell College and still later Campbell University, always used it at the ending of the school year. He would lead in it and also in the shedding of parting tears. He was a warm-hearted man and a fine teacher, and among his subjects was singing, which he loved and which he taught to the whole school at Chapel Hour. “God be with you till we meet again,” we sang as the tears — with a sob here and there — wet our cheeks.

*“God bless* the master of this house  
The mistress bless also  
And all the little children  
That round the table go.

*“And all your kin and kinsmen  
That dwell both far and near.  
I wish you a merry Christmas  
And a happy new year!”*  
(A Christmas carol.)

*God bless you*

Usually said for good luck when someone sneezes. It is a folk belief that when one's mouth is open in sneezing, the devil can get in. But a quick "God bless you" will keep him out.

*goddammit*

An expletive.

*Thomas Godfrey (1736-1763)*

A playwright who lived for awhile in Wilmington and while there wrote "The Prince of Parthia," the first American play produced professionally in America. It was staged in Philadelphia on April 24, 1767, four years after Godfrey's death. He is buried somewhere in the St. James churchyard in Wilmington.

In my youth I visited the churchyard and stood in a turmoil of boyish thinking by a small tombstone which said, as I remember, that he was "buried near this spot." Long after that I visited the churchyard again and could find no marker. Maybe it was temporarily misplaced. I asked a man raking leaves, and he said he didn't know anything about a Thomas Godfrey. The church had been added to recently, and he said, "I reckon he's buried somewhere under that new part."

Archibald Henderson, a professor at UNC and one of its most outstanding ones — man of science and literature and international mind — published an edition of the play in 1917, with a fine and thorough biographical and critical introduction.

*to go down hill*

To weaken, to age, to become seriously ill or worse in health. "He got hit by a streetcar and he's been going down hill ever since."

Thou shalt have no other *gods* before me.

*God's* in his heaven, all's right with the world.

He whom the *gods* love dies young.

*God's plenty*

Enough, often much more than enough.

*God willing and if the creek don't rise*

A respectful and meek-minded phrase often used in reference to some future intent or appointment. "I'll see you on Monday, God willing and if the creek don't rise." Same as "if nothing doesn't happen."

What *goes* up must come down.

*goes with*

Is appropriate. "That blue plaid tie goes with that suit."

Happens or disappears. "I wonder what goes with all the bluebirds. I haven't seen one all spring."

*goggle*

Gargle.

*Go In and Out Your Windows*

A youthful singing game.

The players form a circle holding hands. The one chosen as "It" stands in the center. As the players sing, they lift their joined hands and "It" weaves in and out under them, the "windows." At the second stanza "It" chooses a partner, kneels before him or her and on the third stanza gives the chosen loved one a kiss and then joins the singers. The loved one now becomes "It," and the game goes on. No one cares to notice the quickness with which one love is exchanged for another.

Go in and out your windows (three times)  
For you have gained the day.

Go forth and face your lover, (etc.)  
I'll measure my love to show you, (etc.)  
I kneel before my lover, (etc.)  
It breaks my heart to leave you. (etc.)

*going and coming*

Both ways. "I had him going and coming and I couldn't lose."

*going around in circles*

To be getting nowhere.

*going great guns*

Succeeding in a big way.

*going like hot cakes*

To sell swiftly. "Them new seersucker suits down at Fleischman's are going like hot cakes."

*going man*

A rising man, one winning success, an energetic hustler.

*going on*

Getting near to, approaching. "My boy's six, going on seven."

*goings on*

Deeds, usually in a derogatory sense.



*going to pot*

Wasting, decaying.

*going to the dogs*

Failing, falling on evil ways.

*go in the hole*

Lose money, have a deficit.

All that glitters is not *gold*.

*gold digger*

A female sponger, a sly sycophant.

*goldenrod*

There are numerous species and all beautiful. When late summer comes, their golden glory adorns the landscape — the roadsides, meadows, pasturelands, and fallow fields.

I remember how my English teacher at Buie's Creek Academy loved it, call it flower or call it weed. He wrote a poem about it, and I thought it was wonderful with its rhyming line saying, "It lifts its pale fingers up to God." Later when I grew more critical, I realized that "fingers" was not quite appropriate.

*golly Moses!*

An interjection.

*golly wampus*

An amphibious monster supposed to haunt the deep swamps of the Cape Fear. Also called wampus.

*golly whopper*

A wonder, an outlandish thing or creature.

*gone baby (gone coon, goose or gosling)*

In a lost condition, a person completely out of luck.

*gone-minded*

Crazy.

*gone-sucker*

A poor fellow caught in unhappy circumstances, an unlucky man. "Let that woman get her hooks on him and he's a gone-sucker."

*good*

Physically powerful, strong, full of stamina. "I'm as good a man as he is any day on earth."

Hold fast that which is *good*.

*good and all*

Completely, entirely. "And then he fetched him a blow behind the ear and knocked him out for good and all."

*good as*

As much as, completely, in fact. "Joe Buck is as good as dead and you know it."

as *good* as a dollar

*as good as dead*

Helpless.

as *good* as ever the sun shone on

as *good* as gold

as *good* as pie

A *good beginning* makes a good ending.

A *good book* is the best companion.

*Goodbye* is not gone.

*give the goodbye to*

To break an engagement, to jilt.

*"Goodbye, My Lady Love"*

A familiar song.

A *good conscience* is a soft pillow.

A *good dog* deserves a bone.

*good egg*

A sincere fellow, a hail-fellow-well-met, a sociable person.

*I gooder mind*

To have a mind to, to intend, to plan.

A *good example* is the best example.

*Good grief!*

An exclamation.

A *good head* will get itself hats.

A *good horse* never lacks a saddle.

*good hunting*

May success be yours.

*A good husband* makes a good wife.

*goodies*

The meat of nuts.

*A good Jack* makes a good Jill.

*Good Lord alive!*

An expletive.

*goodly works*

Pious purposes and actions that advance the cause of virtue in general and the Kingdom of God on earth in particular.

These goodly works can take on all kinds of shapes, forms, and fashions in their fulfillment as some of the doings of two Cape Fear Valley characters, Archie and Angus McLean, twin brothers, illustrate. These two were well known personages in our neighborhood, and as a boy I knew them and heard from more than one tongue stories of their exploits in their younger days.

In old age they fell upon hard times and used to visit a great deal around among their relatives to save living expenses, and they always took along a little Negro boy to fan them in the hot weather and keep the flies away and wait on them. Sometimes they would come to our house and stay as much as a couple of weeks, and then, with their welcome finally worn to a frazzle, move on to the next relative, for we were busy farming people and had little time to sit on the front porch taking it easy and discussing by the hour the Biblical origin of the Negro race and the wickedness of the world.

They were identical twins and as alike as two persimmon seeds in the same persimmon or two peas in a pod. And they stayed that way from birth to old age. For the life of me I never could tell them apart. Not only did they look exactly alike and dress alike, but they behaved alike. They had the same motions and gestures and talked alike, voice for voice, and often used the same expressions. You want to remember that about the voice and expressions.

They were little men and supple and quick, and in their young days had the reputation for being fierce as bantam roosters and cocks of the walk in their manhood among the shady women along the Cape Fear River. And it was with this same manhood, so the story went, that on a certain occasion they won local fame for themselves — a fame which endures to this day and keeps their memory green — even beyond all their other churchly good works.

One summer Reverend Sandy King held a three-week revival in the Little Bethel church, and under the power of his preaching Archie and Angus both got converted good and hard from their sins. This Reverend King was the

same man who helped little Welkin Massengill convert old Bull Broadhuss, except that Bull didn't stay converted, they said. But Archie and Angus stayed converted. It seems that when a Scotsman really gets religion in my section of the world he usually swallows a full dose of it and has his money's worth. So the twins took the right hand of fellowship, were baptized good and deep in MacDonald's millpond, and so set their faces clear and shining to serve their Lord.

For a long time the people had been wanting and needing an organ there in Little Bethel Church. And Reverend McGregor, the regular pastor, felt that now since the congregation had been so much increased by Brother King's conversions, the time had come to get a good one and some songbooks too. For a generation or longer old man Syracuse Lang had stood up with his white beard before the mercy seat and beat the time and lined out the hymns for the congregation, and folks were tired of him and his ways.

So the good members were called upon and exhorted to make pledges for the amount needed to buy the organ and the books. Under the spell of their new-found grace, and maybe because they had been such notorious sinners and wanted people to know they were a hundred percent on the Lord's side now, Archie and Angus stuck up their hands and promised the final fifty dollars toward the purchase of the organ and the books. It was a rather rash promise considering how hard money was to come by in those days, as time well proved. But the Lord willing, they said to themselves, they would make the pledge good in the fall when the crops were housed.

The fall came along and the crops everywhere in the neighborhood that year were picayunish and small. First there had been too much wet weather and then too much dry. And that was a queer thing too — to think that the one year Archie and Angus had tried to serve their Lord, He, or whatever stood for Him, had sent them the worst crop they'd ever had. They took notice of that fact betwixt themselves but tried to make the best of the situation instead of complaining against this Higher Authority. At the first frost they hauled their little bitty mess of peas, potatoes, and pork down to Fayetteville and sold them. But by the time they had paid the market and inspection charges and had their mule shod, they had only a dozen or so shillings left, as they called dimes in those days.

While they were sitting around in a cafe glum as sick herons and hungry enough in their bereft condition to eat the Lamb of God, as Bull Broadhuss used to put it, they heard a couple of half-drunk fellows laughing and talking a scandalous thing over in a corner. They were telling about a fast woman by the name of Mrs. Markham who ran a sort of fast house there in Fayetteville and had a standing bet that no man could outdo her in the bouts of love. Yes, she had a standing bet of fifty dollars for any man who would make her call for the calf rope from the Mount of Venus. The twins sat there taking it all in, and they heard the fellows say that no man had ever been

able to collect that bet and no man ever would.

"You hear that, Archie?" said Angus, or maybe Archie said it to Angus. It didn't make any difference which, being as they were so identical in their feelings and thinking.

"Ah, the wickedness of creation!" said Archie.

"Worse'n Sodom and Gomorrah!" said Angus.

"And the woman of Babylon throwed in!" said Archie.

And then they looked at each other. The same idea was coming to them both.

"Like there's a sign in it," said Archie after a while.

"The Lord works in mysterious ways," said Angus.

"His wonders to perform," breathed Archie.

So of the same mind now, they wandered on up the street toward Mrs. Markham's place. It was night by this time and they finally stopped in front of the house, and there in the dark by the sidewalk hedges caucused a while, the way the folks were wont to do at the Democratic Convention in Lillington each campaign year. And so they made their plans.

"Certain to my soul, 'twould be no sin!" said Archie.

"Seeing it's all for the cause anyhow," said Angus.

"And a service to righteousness," said Archie.

"And the wind and the weather bloweth where it listeth, as the Good Book says."

"And the Lord's rain falls on the just and unjust. And sometimes it don't fall at all!"

"Bless His name anyhow," said Angus humbly. "And the Scriptures declare — be ye zealous in goodly works. Amen."

"Aye, lad, true, true — it do say in Hebrews, provoke unto love and do goodly works," said Archie.

"Verse 24, chapter 10," said Angus.

So Angus took his courage in his hand, as you might say, and went into the house. Or it might have been Archie, for all I know. It didn't make any difference which. And sure enough he found the lady all plump and plush and waiting in her parlor. Angus said he was in bad need of a bed and comfort. And so, projicking and hinting around with the widow and saying he had money coming in in the morning to match hers, the agreement was at last made and they started upstairs. She said she was willing to trust him but if his money wasn't there when she called for it she would have him where the hair was short and she meant short. Angus laughed and said wait till ever the play was played — having reference thereby to the old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence which as a sinner he had loved so long. But her determined and certain manner kind of shook him in his shoes and set back his confidence. So he put up a little silent prayer for help and guidance as she led him along the hall and into her room.

Well, some time later he told the lady to please excuse him a minute, he had to get up and go out to the garden house to — er — answer the call of nature. Outside Archie was waiting.

“Well?” asked Archie.

“It’s an undertaking, and we’re up against it,” answered Angus solemnly. “It’s do or die for us. It’s your time now.”

“Aye,” said Archie, forlornlike. And he suddenly shook hands with Angus as if he were departing for foreign parts, which he was.

“And ye’d better keep a kind of a little prayer going the while, Archie,” said Angus. “I did — for a while.”

“No, no, do pray tell!” said Archie, hurriedly and alarmed.

“We’ve tackled several in our time, lad, but she’s the wheel hoss!”

“I will then if I can, but I misdoubt I’ll be able to keep my mind on religious matters,” said Archie.

“This is a religious matter!” said Angus sternly. “And while ye’re in there I think I’ll eat me a snack of barbecue and oysters, short of money though we be.”

“Aye, you do that, lad,” said Archie kindly, “it might help.” So he went in.

“You go and come mighty quick,” said Mrs. Markham.

“Yea, I’m a brief man, and I move quick,” said Archie. “And be not weary in well-doing, as the Scriptures put it.”

“Lord have mercy, you ain’t a preacher, are you?” asked the lady all shocked and aghast.

“No, ma’am, no,” said Archie. “But someday I hope to be a deacon in Little Bethel Church.”

So he put in his licks and some extra for the cause. and then he said excuse him, he had to answer the call of nature and he would be right back.

He met Angus along the hedge coming from his meal at the cafe.

“Well?” Angus said, giving him a good look.

“Oom,” said Archie, “make no mistake about it, we’ve got our hands full.”

“Our calling and election’s got to come from above,” said Angus, “though we do all we can below! And you go down there and eat ye a quick snack too.”

So Angus went in again.

It kept up like that pretty much till daybreak, this visiting the widow and going out to answer the call of nature and eating in between. And finally the woman, stout as she was, hollered “Calf rope! — enough!”

And hiding in her shift, she got up all cramped and winded and produced some money from her bureau drawer. When she paid over the fifty dollars, she turned up the lamp good and strong, saying, “I want to see what manner of man you be — that’s played such havoc here tonight and no doubt ruined

my garden house."

"I'm little but loud," said Angus — or Archie, whichever one it was — as he stowed the money in his pocket.

"Loud!" moaned the woman, "you're the loudest thing that's ever put head in this place. And if you was full grown you'd be a plumb bucket of adders. Get gone from my house and stay gone!"

"Why, bless my soul, you ain't on the puny list, are ye, Miz Markham?" said Angus — or Archie, all gleeful-like. He felt like bragging a bit now that he had the money all safe and won.

"And close the door soft when you leave," she whimpered as she turned out the light, "for I want to sleep a week."

The next Sunday the Reverend McGregor stood up in Little Bethel Church and called for the pledges to be paid. And down the aisle marched Archie and Angus, proud as the two bantam roosters they were, their hair all slicked back and their faces and their collars shining with godliness. They laid the promised fifty dollars on the plate, and Reverend McGregor broke into jubilation. He called on the congregation to witness the deed of Brother Archie and Brother Angus.

"My friends," he said, "behold the goodly works of the Lord's true servants!"

"Amen," said Archie and Angus as they stood before the mercy seat, their heads bowed and their eyes cast humbly down.

"Heavenly grace has blessed them mightily," said the preacher, "and their religion is where their pocketbook is."

Which is to say, the Reverend McGregor might be a good preacher, but as a carpenter with a measuring rule he would have been a failure. He was off several inches.

You might wonder too what the church did when the story got out — as all stories finally do somehow, bless God! Well, it didn't do anything. For by that time Archie and Angus had been made deacons, and the organ was sounding mighty sweet when beautiful Belle Bethune played it Sundays, and the young and the old sang happily from their fine songbooks. So the people didn't make much of a to-do about it, except to tell the story on the sly — the way I'm telling it here — but with more of the details of goodly works in it no doubt.

And I hope it will keep on being told long after I am dead and gone, for it certainly was a thing.

*Good management* is better than good income.

A *good name* is better than a girdle of gold.

A *good name* is rather to be chosen than great riches.

*Goodness gracious!*

An exclamation.

*Goodness knows!*

A mild exclamation.

*good night!*

An exclamation. "But good night, when he kissed me, what could I do?"

*Good night*, sleep tight.

Don't let the bedbugs bite.

(A smarty rhyme.)

*"Good Night, Ladies"*

A favorite male quartet selection.

*Good Place*

Heaven, the New Jerusalem. "Live right, son, and when you die, you'll go to the Good Place."

*good price*

A high price. "I paid a good price for that tractor, Raymond, and I think you ought to throw in a new battery."

*to have the goods on*

To have proof of one's guilt.

*good provider*

One who provides well for the needs of his family.

The *good that men do* lives after them.

*Good things* come in small packages.

*good ways*

A long distance. "Mr. John Riardin lives a good ways up the road."

*good word*

A recommendation, a favorable reply.

A *good word* maketh the heart glad.

*Good words* and deeds are rushes and reeds.

*goody woman*

A midwife.

*gooey*

Sentimental, sticky, sweet.



*a goof*

A crackpot, a fool, also a faux pas.

*goof off*

To crack up mentally, also to loaf during working hours.

*go on*

A statement of disbelief, you don't say so, don't say that, stop talking. "You mean Frank Graham was a goody-goody? Go on, I don't believe it."

*go on a tirade*

To have a hysterical and angry outburst.

*go one better*

Outwit, outsmart.

*go on the warpath*

To prosecute or go after a matter with might and main.

*goose*

To dig one in the side or back with extended thumb, to spur, to tickle.

What is sauce for the *goose* is sauce for the gander.

A setting *goose* never gets fat.

A wild *goose* never laid a tame egg.

Don't kill the *goose* that lays the golden egg.

*gooseberries*

A large kind of green huckleberry that grows in the thick woods.

*goose grease*

Grease made from the fat of a goose and used for many folk cures, good for rubbing sore joints or spreading on flannel to put on a croupy chest, etc.

*The goose hangs high.*

Everything's fine.

*His goose is cooked.*

Having irretrievable bad luck, ultimate undone condition.

*goose pimples*

Small temporary eruptions on the skin resulting from cold, fear or excitement. "The good close harmony by that barbershop quartet gives me goose pimples."

*like a goose's ass in mulberry time*

Purple from eating mulberries. "His face turned as purple as a goose's ass

in mulberry time.”

*goose skin*

Skin of one's hands marked from long staying in the water.

*wild goose chase*

An effort or trip that amounts to nothing.

*Goosie, goosie, gander,*  
Whither do you wander?  
Upstairs and downstairs,  
And in my lady's chamber.  
There I met an old man  
Who would not say his prayers.  
I took him by the left leg  
And threw him down the stairs.  
(A nursery rhyme.)

*go out*

Die, fade away. “That fire is going to go out if you don't watch it.”

To be excused from a classroom. We boys used to snap our fingers and raise a hand signifying our need to “go out,” to attend to nature's business, to go to the bushes. The teacher's permission was always granted.

*goozle*

The throat or the esophagus.

*go poke*

A traveling bag.

*gorge*

Temper, anger, spleen. “When that man cussed him, his gorge riz and there was a fight to a fare-you-well.”

*gorm (gaum)*

A mess, mixture, like a gorm of dirt.

*gorm up*

To choke up.

*gormy*

Dirty, all in a mess.

*go 'round in circles*

To waste time, be confused.

*Gosh!*

An exclamation.

*Gosh a-mighty!*

An exclamation.

*gosling*

A young adolescent boy.

*gosling voice*

A hoarse voice, the changing voice of a young boy entering puberty.

*gospel truth*

The absolute truth.

*“Go Tell Aunt Patsy”*

A lullaby song.

“Go tell Aunt Patsy (three times)

The old gray goose is dead.

“One she’s been saving (three times)

To make a feather bed.

“The old gander’s mourning (three times)

Because his wife is dead.

“The goslings are crying (three times)

Because their Mama’s dead.

“The whole family’s weeping (three times)

Because the goose is dead.”

*go the whole hog*

To make an all-out exertion, to shoot the works.

*go through the motion*

To pretend, a seem-so.

*go through the roof*

To blow one’s top, to explode in a violent reaction. “When he started abusing my mother, I went through the roof.”

*go to grass*

A dismissal command. An order to get rid of a silly or troublesome person. Same as “go to hell,” “go to the devil,” “go to Jericho,” “go to Guinea,” “go to Halifax,” and so on. The last may refer to the fact that North Carolina Tory prisoners were sent to be confined in the Halifax, North Carolina, jail, as for instance, Flora MacDonald’s husband and son, who later were sent to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Also a friendly imprecation.

*go to hell in a handbag (basket)*

Make a mess of things for no reason at all.

*go to Jericho!*

A mild expletive, usually of dismissal or condemnation, much like "go to hell!" "When I saw he was lying, I said, 'You go to Jericho!'"

*go-to-meeting manner*

Proper, pious, discreet.

*to go to oneself*

To attend to nature's wants.

*go to see Mrs. Jones*

To go to the bathroom, a girl's phrase.

*go to the bushes (woods)*

To defecate.

*go to the dogs*

To fall into debauchery, to fail.

*go to the mat with*

To meet head on, to wrestle with, to attempt a serious effort at a solution.

*got to*

Must.

*go underground*

To refuse to talk.

*gourd fiddle*

A fiddle made from a gourd. Mr. John Reardon, unable to buy a real fiddle, made himself one from a gourd and, with a homemade horsehair bow, was able to play at dances. When his bow gave out, he sawed on it with a lightwood splinter and did fairly well.

*gourd-guard*

Helmet, a head protection, especially for motorcycle riders.

*gourd head*

A foolish person.

*gourd house*

A bird house. In Eastern North Carolina it used to be the custom to put up a tall pole with several cross arms and hang from these cross arms empty gourds with openings cut for the martins to build in. The martins were wonderful birds for keeping hawks and crows driven away.

*to saw gourds*

To snore raucously.

*gourdy*

Green, unsophisticated, hayseedy.

*go 'way from heah*

A joshing exclamation somewhat like, "Do tell!"

*grab-all*

A greedy person

*Grab all,*

Lose all.

*grabble potatoes*

To dig potatoes with one's hands.

*grab-gutted*

Greedy.

*by grabs!*

A mild expletive.

*well-grabs*

Small bent-pointed grabs for retrieving buckets lost in wells. "Go over to Lum Butts' and get his well-grabs. The rope busted and I've lost my bucket."

as *graceful* as an elephant

as *graceful* as a swan

*say grace over*

Manage, look after. "I've got more land now than I can say grace over."

*gracious!*

An exclamation. Also gracious alive, gracious goodness, gracious me, good gracious.

*gracious plenty*

A good supply, a superfluity.

*make the grade*

To measure up to, to succeed.

*with a grain of salt*

Doubtingly, questioningly.

*grain cradle*

A long wooden fingered utensil for cutting oats, wheat, barley, etc. The

extended sickle blade was fitted into the grain of the cradle, and the laborer holding to its long handle and handpiece could swing it horizontally to the ground, cutting the grain and allowing it to fall back on the fingers. And then as the cradle was lifted to rest on the right thigh, the left hand of the cutter would sweep down, gather up the long stems of the cut grain and lay them aside, these small handfuls to be gathered up and tied in larger bundles after they had cured out in the sun. The several motions in cutting became one and set in a rhythm, swoop after swoop, dip after dip, and ever and ever a half step forward at the same time.

How I used to love to get up early, sharpen the cradle blade with my whetrock and step into the dewy fields in the glad morning sunlight. I remember trying to show off one day with my cradling prowess. Mr. Joe Johnson, a near neighbor, had five acres of wheat he wanted cut. I was up early and went to it — hour after hour under the burning sun. After a few mouthfuls of lunch I was back at it. I finished cutting the last of the five acres before dark came down. He paid me in a stubby-pencilled check — \$1.50. It was big money to me. But the real bigness I was so proud of were the youthful muscles swelling under my shirt sleeves.

*small grain*

Rye, wheat, oats as contrasted to corn.

*gramper*

Grandpa.

*granddaddy*

A kind of spraddle-legged insect. "Come here, child, let me comb out your hair. It's all tangled up like a nest of granddaddies."

*"Grandfather's Clock"*

A favorite song.

*grandmother*

Menstrual period. "Grandmother has come visiting and I can't be with you."

*grand-rascal*

A cheat, a con man, a crooked politician.

*grand right and left*

A command or call in a square dance in which the hands are right and left around the set until partners meet, ladies to the left and gents to the right.

*granny's alive!, 'y grannys!, granny's sakes!*

Mild expletives.

*granny woman*

A midwife.

*Grape* seeds will cause appendicitis.

I'll eat the goose that eats the *grass* that grows on your grave.

*Grass* never grows  
When the wind blows.

*to let grass grow under one's feet*

To delay unduly, to vacillate.

*put out to grass*

To be left to one's own responsibility.

*grasshopper*

A spindly-legged fellow.

Oh, *grave*, where is thy sting!

It is irreverent and bad luck to step over a *grave*.

If you walk on a *grave*, a ghost will haunt you.

*grave decorations*

Trinkets. My own little sister Lura used to have a glass slipper trinket on her grave. It has long ago disappeared.

*gravel*

To annoy, worry.

*gravel in his gizzard*

Stout-hearted, courageous.

*graveyard*

Secret. "This is graveyard talk."

A diseased prostitute. "That woman was a walking graveyard — I found that out in ten or fifteen days."

*graveyard cough*

Tuberculosis, a cigarette cough.

*graveyard grass*

Periwinkle.

*graveyard song*

"Did you ever think as the hearse rolls by  
That some of these days both you and I  
Will be carried off in the self same hack  
And we won't be thinking of coming back.

“In the lonesome grave they’ll lower us down  
And the men with shovels will be waiting round.  
They’ll shovel in dirt and shovel in rocks  
And won’t give a hoot (damn) if they break your box.

“And the worms crawl in and the worms crawl out  
All over your chin and over your snout.  
They invite their friends and their friends’ friends, too,  
You’re a looking sight when they get through.”

*redeye gravy*

Gravy from country ham, made by pouring a little water in the pan after cooking the slice of ham.

*gray* as a ‘possum

*gray backs*

Body lice.

*Graybeard* and red lips make poor lovers.

*gray mare*

A horsey wife, a quarrelsome married woman.

“*Old Gray Mare*”

A popular picnic and moonlight hayriding song.

“The old gray mare  
Ain’t what she used to be” (3 times)  
“The old gray mare ain’t what she used to be  
Many long years ago.” And so on.

*send to graze*

To turn out of office, to fire from a job.

*grease*

To soft soap, to lather up, flatter, bribe. “I greased his palm with a thousand dollars and our bill went through the legislature as slick as a whistle.”

fried in his own *grease*

*greased lightning*

Fierce and instant action. “He turned quick as greased lightning and walloped him in the face.”

*greasy*

Mess call, a prison camp cook.



*greasy skillet*

Good provisions, good eating.

*greasy spoon*

A cheap, usually unsanitary restaurant.

*great balls of fire!*

An expletive.

*great-big*

For emphasis. "He's a great-big boy and he ought to know better."

*great day in the morning!*

A mild expletive.

*Greater* love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

The *greatest* oaks have been little acorns.

*great God Almighty (great godfrey, great guns)*

Mild expletives.

*by the great horn spoon*

A mild swearing phrase.

*great Joseph*

A voluminous sort of overcoat.

*a great life if you don't weaken*

A good situation if one behaves himself and keeps working.

*great scott!*

A mild expletive.

*great shakes*

Great stuff, usually "no great shakes."

*Great Spirit*

The Indians' God. According to the Indian folklore the Great Spirit was more mild and merciful than fierce and categorically just. In fact he was a notch above the Mosaic God generated from the thinking of the Jewish people. Since man makes his god rather than the other way around, the Great Spirit perished as the Indian perished.

A *great tree* hath a great fall.

*great unwashed*

The common people, the hoi polloi, the proletariat.

*Great White Father*

The Indian designation for the President of the United States. A proper designation no doubt for such presidents as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson but a grievous mistake when applied to Andy Jackson, who really ruined the Indians.

*Grecian bend*

An exaggerated bustle or way of walking affected by many large-bustled women back in the 1890's.

*Greediness* bursts the bag.

*greedy as a hog (pig)*

*greedy-gut*

Glutton.

*Greek*

Mysterious, baffling, unintelligible. "That puzzle is all Greek to me."

as *green* as a gourd

as *green* as grass

as *green* as poison

The moon is made of *green* cheese.

To wear *green* on St. Patrick's Day brings good luck.

*green end*

Sawmill work. The roller-bench end of a sawmill where the green outsides are taken and laid aside as a log is being sawed. I used to love working there in the summer as a youth.

*green goose*

A young inexperienced person.

*green gown*

Seduction, to tumble a woman in the grass. "He gave her the green gown, that's what he did."

*Green Gravel*

A children's singing game. A ring is formed around one person chosen to be "It." The children march or dance around singing—

"Green gravel, green gravel, the grass is so green.

It's pretty, it's pretty as ever I've seen."

One of the marchers now turns in and goes to the one in the center and

“grieves” with him or her as the marchers sing—

“Poor Mary, poor Mary, your true love is dead,  
He sent you a letter so turn back your head.”  
[or “Bow down your head.”]

The game continues with the same verses until all are in the ring grieving together.

### “*Green Grow the Lilacs*”

One of our many lyrical love laments and among the best.

Lynn Riggs, the playwright, used to visit us from time to time, and we always had pleasure from his singing and guitar playing. Of his many folk songs, we perhaps liked “Green Grow the Lilacs” best. He used it as the title for one of his plays and was with us the night it opened on Broadway. About midnight he called up the Theatre Guild to find out what sort of reception it had got. A success! Later Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein made a fine musical drama from it, a sort of folk opera — “Oklahoma.”

“Green grow the lilacs all sparkling with dew,  
I’m lonely, my darling, since parting from you,  
And by the next meeting I hope to prove true,  
To change the green lilacs to the red, white and blue.”

“I passed my love’s window, both early and late.  
The look that she gave me, it made my heart ache.  
The look that she gave me was harmful to see,  
For she loves another one better than me.”

### *green hand*

An experienced person, also a good hand to make crops grow, often “green thumb.”

### *pulled too green*

Immature, acting grownup too early.

### *greens*

Collards, lettuce, rape, kale.

### “*Greensleeves*”

The beautiful old Elizabethan song. I first used it in “The Lost Colony” in 1937, hoping to hear it whistled along the streets of Manteo. It was. Falstaff first mentions it in “The Merry Wives of Windsor.”

A *green winter* makes a fat churchyard.

*Greeny*

A tag game. When one child, pursued by another, can show a piece of green, a leaf or twig or bit of green grass, then he can't be tagged.

*Rose Grenow*

A Confederate secret agent in the Civil War and famous for her exploits. She was well-born, cultured and wealthy. Jefferson Davis said to her, so it was reported, "But for you there would have been no Battle of Bull Run." She had warned the Southern leader of the approach of the Federal forces. A white marble monument "to her memory" is in Wilmington's beautiful Oakdale Cemetery where she is buried. Its inscription reads, "This monument commemorates the deeds of Mrs. Rose Grenow, a bearer of dispatches to the Confederate government. She was drowned off Fort Fisher from the blockade runner 'Condor' while attempting to run the blockade Sept. 30, 1864. The body was washed ashore on Fort Fisher beach and was brought to Wilmington, N.C. This monument erected by the Ladies' Memorial Association."

*Grey eye greedy gut,*  
Eat the whole world up.  
(A teasing rhyme.)

*Grey mules* don't die — they turn into Baptist preachers.

*on the griddle*

In a hot place, a tight situation.

*grim* as death

*grin*

A spree, a big time. "Man, did we have a grin last Sad'dy!"

*grins* like a 'possum

*grist*

Important material, something to one's advantage. "All is grist that comes to my mill."

*grit one's teeth*

Make the best of a bad job, summon extra willpower to meet a situation, usually "grit one's teeth and bear it."

*grits*

A popular Southern dish made of boiled coarse cornmeal.

*grits and gravy*

A popular Southern dish, boiled coarse cornmeal served with country ham gravy.

*groaning time*

Lying in time for a woman.

*grog blossom*

A pimple on the nose or face caused by overuse of strong drink.

*groovy*

In the groove, just right.

*a gross voice*

A bass voice.

*down to the ground*

Completely, entirely, absolutely.

*groundhog*

A common woodchuck.

One of the most popular folk beliefs in the Valley is that connected with the groundhog. This animal which few of us have ever seen is supposed to come out of its hiding place exactly at noon on the second day of February. If it is cloudy, he will stay out and fair spring weather will soon come. If the sun is shining and he sees his shadow, he will bolt back into his hole, and winter will continue for six more weeks. Groundhog day is still important to a lot of people and the newspapers usually come out with dull comments and even editorials related to it on February 2.

*ground itch* (eetch)

A fungus curse to all us barefoot children in the summer. Also called dew-poisoning or dew sores. As a ringworm or fether it was a torment between our toes especially, and with worse itching than poison ivy. We put tallow, kerosene oil, fatback, and all sorts of medicaments on it. The best cure was to wear our shoes again for awhile, or so we found out. The family doctor says it is caused by the invasion of hookworm larvae. And yet with all our ground itching, we Green children never had hookworm, so far as we knew.

*ground pea*

Peanut, goober.

*ground puppy*

Salamander. When I was a boy, the Negro hired man on our land, Wesley Armstrong, used to tell us that if a ground puppy barked at us, we would have fits.

*grounds*

Lees, sediment.

*groun'y*

Full of grounds. "This coffee is groun'y."

*growing hand*

A good hand to make crops grow, same as green thumb and green hand.

*growing weather*

Moist warm weather good for crops.

*grubbing hoes*

The front teeth, usually buck teeth. "He's digging his grave with them grubbing hoes."

Gnarled and powerful workmen's hands.

*grub hoe*

A mattock, a grubbing hoe.

*grub hooks*

Hands.

*grubs*

Roots, small stumps. "Man, I sweated a peck down in them low grounds digging and prizing up them grubs."

*grub time*

Mealtime.

*grudgings*

Coarse flour, the bran from flour grinding.

*grum*

Surly, glum.

*grumble-guts*

A confirmed complainer.

*grumbles*

Complainings.

*grunt*

Complain. "She jist sets and grunts there in her rocking chair."

A complainer, a bellyacher.

To defecate.

*grunts* like a pig

*gruz*

Past tense of grease. "I gruz that baby good with tallow and the cramp went away."

Also past tense of graze. "He shot at me and the bullet just grazed my skull right here."

*guano bugle*

A tapering cylindrical bugle made of tin which was strapped over a person's shoulder. With a bucket in one hand, he would dip up a handful of guano and "sow it" down through the bugle, walking along the while. Then the plough would ridge the dirt over the guano, and the crop would be planted behind that. We'd often use guano bugles in serenading at Christmas. Some of the young boys would get proficient at blowing these things, putting the small end to their lips and turning loose and laying out a bellow that could be heard a mile or more.

*guarddeen*

Guardian.

*guardian angel*

There was a common folk belief that a human being is accompanied through life by a protecting and good angel — an angel who warns him of evil and bad luck and strives with him to let his better nature obtain. By constantly committing evil a person can finally so discourage his guardian angel that the angel deserts him. And lo and behold, he's in a mess of trouble from then on, so says Aunt Candace, the Negro washerwoman.

*by guess and by god*

Steering or acting by haphazard.

*by guess and by golly*

Same as above.

*guggle*

Gargle, gurgle.

*guiding light*

Somewhat the same as guardian angel, a person's conscience.

*Guilt* may have legs but scandal has wings.

A *guilty* conscience needs no accuser.

as *guilty* as sin

*guinea eggs*

Freckles.

*a Guinea nigger*

An especially black Negro and one who, if his gums were blue, had a "fatal bite," poisonous as a rattlesnake. Or so it was believed in the Valley. When

I was a little boy and a Guinea nigger with blue gums showed up, I was especially frightened of him.

*gulley dirt*

Worthless things or people.

*gulleywasher*

A flood, heavy rain.

*gum*

A container for corn, oats, etc., made from a length of hollow tree, usually a black gum.

Toothless chewing. "Since I lost my teeth I just have to gum it when it comes to eating."

*by gum!*

A mild oath.

*gum crib*

A cradle made from a halved section of a hollow log with rockers added.

*gummed up*

Tangled up, in a bind, etc.

*gum up*

Make a mess of.

*gump*

A fool, a silly person.

*gun*

To search with intent to shoot, to cripple or kill.

*gunboats*

Excessively large shoes or feet.

*gunk*

Sticky or greasy substance. "When the motor jammed, we had to clean out a lot of gunk."

*gunnysack*

Hard-woven burlap fabric bag.

*gunpowder*

Given to animals to make them spirited, fiery.

Feed a dog *gunpowder* to make him mean.

*gurglin' on a rope*

Said of one hanged.



*the gut question*

The basic question, the heart of the matter.

*guts*

Physical stamina, resoluteness of spirit, moral courage.

"I have known a lot of men with plenty of guts in my time," said Dr. Nathan Brown to me one day as we were riding out in the country to see a patient, "including a doctor who got a strange compulsion to murder his wife and three children and, not being able to beat it off, he went into the woodshed and shot himself for fear of the terrible crime he might commit. It took guts to do that and I honor him for it. He and I grew up together as boys and were mighty close in college, and he told me about this strange feeling that had got hold of him and hinted to me that if the feeling got too powerful he hoped he'd destroy himself before he did the bloody deed. Yes, he tried psychiatric help but it didn't work. After he was dead and buried I tried to comfort his widow, but she wouldn't be comforted. Then thinking it was all right, I told her of his secret, expecting her to honor him for his sacrifice of his own life. Rather than relieving her, it redoubled her trouble. She was horrified, and I cursed myself out for being a fool. She had ordered a fine tombstone for the doctor, but after she heard my story and my praise she turned on me with blazing eyes. And she cancelled the tombstone order and the doctor lies in an unmarked grave to this day.

"But the fellow I had in mind to tell you about was David Vance, a man of great guts, also. When he got down on his deathbed from pneumonia, the preachers persuaded him that he must confess his sins, clean out his heart and get ready to meet his God or else burn forever in hell. Dave had been something of a rounder in his day, and had gone fast and furious along the path of love and ladies in the neighborhood. Nor had he gone his way alone, but many a crony had shared in his sly wanderings and his delight, including a few of the more orthodox church ones.

"So when the news got out that Dave was in a mortal condition and was going to make a clean breast of everything and be ready when the white horse of death came neighing in front of his house to carry him away, many of the brethren and sisters of his comradeship waited on him in a body.

" 'Look here, Dave,' said Green Mumford, one of the ringleaders in all the former doings as he stood by the bed of the repentant sinner, 'we know how you feel. We know the time ain't long with you. But after all, Dave, you're going out of this world, but we've got to live in it. And if you tell everything you know and it gets around, it's going to be hard on us. Not only will our reputations — such as we have — be pretty much ruined, but I fear the law will get some of us. So we beseech and beg you, Dave, to have a thought on the living. We know you've got guts, Dave, you've proved it many a time, and we believe you will stay quiet.'

“So it was that Dave finally gave in to his friends and kept his mouth shut right up till the time death hit and enfolded him. So he passed on over the river, with his secrets locked in his breast. The preachers said he kept his mouth shut. And in later days his cronies, thinking on the great sacrifice he had made, decided to mend their ways, and most of them joined the church, saying it was the least they could do after what he had done for them.

“But Fanny Davis, his truest love, refused to change. She said she wanted to go where Dave might be.”

*gut scraper*

A fiddler.

*gutty*

Impudent, also brave, tough.

*gut warmer*

Whiskey.

*guv*

Past tense of give.

*to guy*

To tease, derogate, mock, much the same as blackguard.

*gwine*

Going.

*gypsies*

Dark-skinned itinerant people who used to appear from time to time in the Valley in small bands. When I first saw them as a boy, they traveled by horse and wagon conveyances, later by automobiles and usually worn-out ones at that. They told fortunes and were supposed to be unconscionable thieves, especially devastating as to chickens and sometimes even stealing babies. Just below Buie's Creek once stood a great pine tree. Professor H.F. Page first pointed it out to me. It was called the gypsy pine, and he wrote a poem about it. It had a great hollow cut out of it where the gypsies chipped out lightwood for their campfires nearby. It finally collapsed under the chipping and lay rotting away. Both it and the gypsies are gone now.

*gypsy*

A high-spirited woman.

# H

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*hab*

Have.

*Habit* is second nature.

*hack*

A prison guard.

An instrument for scarifying trees, especially longleaf pine, to secure oozeings and drippings of the turpentine into the "box" below.

To embarrass.

To pile up. "I've got to hack my lumber so it'll dry."

*hackle*

A steel- or iron-toothed comb or utensil for dressing flax.

*hackles*

Ill-tempered feelings, an irritable or angry reaction. "Every time I see that fellow he raises my hackles."

*had*

Possessed sexually.

*Had a little dog,*

His name was Rough.

I think my speech

Is long enough.

*Had a little dog,*

His name was Rover.

When he died,

He died all over.

*Had a little mule,*  
His name was Dandy.  
Fed him cake  
And sugar candy.

*Had a little mule,*  
His name was Jack.  
I rode his tail  
To save his back.

His backbone broke  
The marrow flew.  
Get up, Jack,  
And go on through.

*Had a little pig*  
And fed him clover  
And when he died,  
He died all over.

*I had a little pony,*  
His name was Jack.  
I rode his tail  
To save his back.

His tail was black  
His belly was blue  
And when he ran  
He fairly flew.

*I had five cents*  
And put it on the fence.  
They come a flood of rain  
And I ain't seen it since.  
(Recitation rhymes.)

*I've had it*  
Been seduced, or "put through the mill." Also to be worn out, tired.

*had rather*  
Showing a preference, much rather.

*had up*  
To be brought before a judge or the police.

*hafter*  
Have to.

*haggle*

To argue.

*hag-ridden*

Pursued by bad luck, afflicted by nightmares. To be ridden by hags or witches as a horse sometimes is in the night, a proof of which is its tangled mane in the morning.

*hail columbia*

Rough treatment. "Behave yourself, boy, or I'll give you hail columbia."

*Hail Over*

See "Heigh Over."

*hail shot*

Grape-shot.

*hair*

Fine measurement, "to a hair," "within a hair of."

*Hair* by hair makes a head bare.

A person who never stole anything has a lock of *hair* growing in the palm of his hand.

Get him where the *hair* is short.

*hair-grower*

A patent medicine.

*hair in the butter*

Complication in a delicate or ticklish situation.

*hair of the dog*

Some additional drams the morning after, help for a hangover. "The hair of the dog is good for the bite."

*make one's hair curl*

Reaction to dreadful news or apprehension.

*make one's hair stand on end*

An extreme reaction to a dreadful happening or bad news.

Finding a *hairpin* predicts finding a friend.

*hair-receiver*

Small covered china dish with a hole in the cover to receive combings in the days of long tresses.

*hairside*

The outside. "Hit him on the hairside."

*turn a hair*

To show a reaction, respond. "The preacher watched that electrocution and didn't turn a hair."

*hairry*

Dangerous, risky, frightening, difficult, hazardous.

*Half a loaf* is better than none.

*half-assed*

A sorry thing, a poor effort, disreputable.

*half-baked*

Inexperienced, raw, over-hasty action.

*better half*

Wife or husband, usually wife.

*half-cracked*

Somewhat mad, loony.

*Half-doing* is many a man's undoing.

*half-gone*

Half-drunk, half-asleep.

*half-in-two*

To divide an object, as a piece of timber, into two equal parts.

*haven't heard the half of it*

Only partially understood or disclosed.

*half-screwed*

Half-drunk.

*half seas over*

Same as half-screwed.

*half-slewed*

Half-drunk.

*Halifax*

An indefinite, far-off place. "Go to Halifax!" which may refer to the fact that North Carolina Tory prisoners were sent for confinement in the Halifax, North Carolina, jail.

***hallelujah gal***

Member of the Salvation Army, a female preacher.

***halo round the sun***

Indicates falling weather, rain or snow.

Don't speak of a *halter* in a house where a man has been hanged.

Pray devoutly and *hammer* stoutly.

***hammer and tongs***

With full force, with all one's might. "If you're going to win the game, you've got to go at it hammer and tongs."

***hammerhead***

A stubborn horse or person.

***a hammering***

Heavy punishment.

***hamstrung***

Severely hindered, handicapped.

***hancher***

Handkerchief.

***hand***

Handwriting. "She writes a beautiful hand."

The *hand* is no good without the arm.

***hand and foot***

A term related to attentiveness. "Bernie loved that woman and waited on her hand and foot."

***good hand***

An adept person, a fine worker. "I'm a good hand at washing dishes."

***get the upper hand***

To get an advantage.

***handcuff***

To shut out, to stop, to beat. "Virginia really handcuffed Carolina in that game."

A *handful of common sense* is worth a bushel of learning.

***handful of days***

A short time left in one's life span.

*get a hand in*

To learn the ropes, become adept at.

*hand in glove with*

To be on very close and intimate terms.

*to fly off the handle*

Lose one's temper.

*handled with kid gloves*

Treated carefully, politely, delicately.

*the hand of prophecy*

A figure of speech denoting a force that foreshadows what is to be, a prophecy as to a coming event or happening.

One day Malcolm Fowler, a Valley folklorist and historian, and I were poking along the banks of the Cape Fear River near the place where efforts to canalize it took place long ago. He said there was an old rock chimney standing in the woods he wanted to show me. We went to see it and as we stood there he told me the story of one Joe Ed Baucom who built it.

"This Joe Ed," he said, "was something of a rounder from way back, and he built a cabin retreat with this chimney to it, here above the river. He used to come down here every weekend and have big parties with a lot of hard drinking liquor. You can see out there the little stone bridge he built across that ravine. And right over there is a spring he walled up. Joe Ed, as I say, was a godless character all right. When he was fixing up his place here he decided he needed more rock and flat ones at that. Down the river there a piece was an old Scotch cemetery. So what did Joe Ed do but bring a lot of the tombstones up here and put 'em down in his walkway for paving stones. And his and his cronies' godless feet would walk right over the inscriptions put there by loving friends and relatives. Well, one of the relatives — no need to say his name — decided at first to go to the law but then he decided on something more vengeful. He knew that Joe Ed had a superstitious streak in him for all his worldly wickedness — as most of us have — and so he made his plans.

"Lo and behold, one evening when Joe Ed arrived to get ready for his weekend party, there at his doorstep was a tombstone standing up with the inscription on it, 'Joe Ed Baucom, Born January 3, 1881, Died April 4, 1929.'

"Well, it kinda shook Joe Ed, but in his godlessness he tried to laugh it off. Anyway April was nearly a year away. And his party that weekend was more riotous and whole-hog than ever before. But try as he might, he continued thinking about the prophecy as time passed. He kept seeing that inscription, even though he had toted the tombstone down to the river and flung it into a deep water hole. Finally the prophecy thing ha'nted him so



much that he took refuge in liquor and stayed drunk most of the time. Then you know what? On the very day of April 4 he got into his flivver and started to town to buy more liquor. He ran off the road into a gully. His flivver overturned and killed him. That's what it did. The hand of prophecy fulfilled itself but in a way no doubt different from anything Joe Ed expected."

*handout*

A charity gift.

*hand over fist*

Fast, very quickly. "The Sprunt brothers are making money hand over fist in the cotton business."

*hand-raised dick*

Hand-trained penis.

*hand-running*

In succession, without a break.

The *hands* are Esau's but the voice is Jacob's.

A deceptive action having reference to Jacob's deceiving his father Isaac.

*hands are tied*

Unable to act.

If a girl, in folding her *hands* together, instinctively puts her right thumb on top, she will rule her husband. If not, he will rule her.

*Handsome* is as handsome does.

*hand spike*

A length of wooden sapling, usually oak or hickory, tapered at each end, to be placed under logs for lifting toward the log-heap to be burned in clearing land.

*hand's-turn*

A bit of work. "She's so lazy she won't do a hand's-turn about the house."

cold *hands*, warm heart

*handy*

Convenient.

*handy* as a button on a backhouse door

*to get the hang of*

To learn how, to master a problem, to catch on to the working of a machine.

*hanged if I do!*

A mild expletive.

*hanging and wiving go by destiny*

An old 16th century saying and repeated many times by different English writers and folklorists.

The first two went together all right so far as old Aunt Jenny McLean was concerned, but as for “this heah destiny you talk about, Mr. Green,” she said to me, “I misdoubts it anyhow — and pray do tell me what it means. Well, I know this — it was a hanging that brung me my true love and husband. You kin forget the other.”

Sitting in her little house one night there in Chapel Hill, I listened to her tell about it, the while she ironed away on some delicate dresses for the University professors’ wives.

“Yeh, lak a whisper, lak a breath, as suddent as death, love kin come to you. Somep’n knocks mebbe on the do’ of yo’ heart and say, Lemme in, and you never know when it’s gwine knock and when it’s not gwine knock. So ’twas the fust time I ever slapped these two eyes on the man was meant to be my husband.

“I’ll never forgit the day it happened nuther. What a day! August time it was, and a Friday. A big hanging was being held over there in Hillsborough, and I mean big. Everybody for miles around was up long ’fore the crack of daybreak gitting primped and dollied and fixed to go to that there spectacle. And people, people, white and colored, everywhere! That was the biggest crowd of human beings gathered together I’d ever seen in all my born days. From every direction they come. From the north and the east and the south and the west — in steer cyarts, in road cyarts, in wagons and in carriages.

“And the University itself give out of schooling that day, ’cazen all the students and ’fessors mostly had made off over there to see the hanging. And this weren’t jes one hanging. It was three hangings. Three po’ sinful men was to be hung by the neck till dead — ‘and the Lord have mercy on yo’ po’ souls,’ the jedge had said.

“I knowed all three of ’em. Leastwise I had recognizance of ’em. Two of ’em was white folks and one of ’em was a po’ colored man. There was Mr. Harris and Mr. Johnson. They was the white men, and as full of sin and weekedness as a copperhead snake is full of green pizen. And then there was Louis Colton. He was the colored one. Po’ Louis. Sorrow and woeful was the day he mixed hisself up with them ’ere white folks. They was gamblers and drunkards and pistol-toters — robbers and thieves, they was. And when Louis j’ined up with ’em he putt hisself in their power, everybody said so. And he allus done whatever they told him to do. Sam Ragland was in it lakwise. He was a nigger but they let him loose ’cazen he turnt what they called state’s evidence.

“Yeh, turble, turble it was. But the Good Book do say, verily, verily

a man shall reap what he sows. And all them men sowed trouble and death and they reaped the same in the vineyard of Almighty God. That old saying is right that says if you run with the dogs you'll lakly scratch fleas. And another one that says when yo' house is afire it's too late to dig a well to get water to putt it out.

"Our whole family was all set to go and see the dreadful happening. Up early and breakfast cooked, we soon was dressed out in our best bib and tucker, Ma and Pa and the two little boys and us girls. They was a whole carpetful of chillun in our house. I was the oldest girl in the family and had to keep a lookout foh the little uns. But I'm here to tell you as soon as ever us got in the grip of that occasion they was scattered and gone and I fo'got all 'bout them too. But later on in the day us all got 'sembled back to the wagon and no damage done to any of 'em. And in the meanwhile time, love done blossomed in my heart.

"The roads was mighty miry and awful then, not lak they is now, all hard-suffaced up and smooth as a otter's slide. And 'fore we come to Eno River near the edge of the town the sun was a big blazing bird in the sky and it was 'way on in the morning. Pa whupped up the mule 'caze he felt us was already late. We crossed over the bridge and bruised on in a jiffy to'ads the jailhouse on the right hand there.

"And what was the very first sight I did see? Well, it was a big-eyed face looking out the jail window, and it weren't nobody's face but po' Louis Colton's. And it was all flaring and ill-sick looking, it was. He seen us and hollered out in a loud voice, 'Hey there, you all. This here's Louis.' And not knowing what I done I raised up my hand in a kind of greeting to the po' lost man. But my tongue wouldn't say nary a word. And he then hollered out mo' louder still and I kin hear the words he said even to this day — 'This here's the day I'm to be hung, folkses. And I'm jest as clear of what they's hangin' me fo' as ever was Jesus Christ the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.'

"My mammy grunted and spet a dip of snuff over the wagon into the road. She allus done that-a-way suddent and quick when she was riled.

" 'That's a awful thing — fo' him to be telling lies lak that and he so clost to meeting his Maker,' she said.

" 'I reckon lak as not Louis musta been reading the Good Book a lot — whilst he's shet up in there,' said my father, 'jedging from his words.'

" 'Well,' my mammy said, as she looked round and about at us chillun — 'mark my word that a gap in the axe allus shows in the chips. And, chillun, listen to what I say — a minute may break what a 'ternity of time kin never mend.'

" 'That's raight,' said my father, 'and that's how come us brung you over here — so ever' one of you kin learn a lesson — a lesson to go with you thoo life. And you needn't to worry 'bout Louis, you needn't cry no

lost tears down fo' him. He was guilty. He's gotta suffer fo' it. He split that good white woman's haid open with a' axe.'

" 'Amen,' said my mammy, 'and it was proved on him. And another thing he done done. Don't fo'git that,' said my mammy.

" 'I don't,' said my daddy. 'Louis putt strychnine and arsenic in his wife's coffee, chillun, and he killed her too. But they never did convict him of that, though in certain ever'boday knowed he done it.'

" 'Sho' they did,' said my mammy. 'But when he come to killing that white woman — that 'fessor's wife and her finding him robbing her house — well, that's where he spill't the milk all over hisself.'

" 'Didn't he though,' said my daddy.

" 'And now the people was swarming all up around the jailhouse lak a gorm of bees. And my daddy drawed up clost by and let us git out, and he went off and hitched the mule to a tree in the jailhouse yard. And there us chillun all stood around in the push of people looking on with great big sorrowful eyes and waiting to see the prisoners brung out.

" 'And soon here come the high shurff and his deppities in their big boots — *clonk-clonk*, and they carried their pistols in their hands. They went in the jail and brung out the prisoners handcuffed. And the scattering dogs around 'gun to bark. The people stretched and craned and gaped to see it all. They walked the three of 'em around in the yard, the three that was to die, and let 'em partake and taste of sunshine and the sweet air fo' their last day on earth.

" 'And any time now I close my eyes I kin see their po' faces. And death was in 'em and their eyes was wide-rimmed and red. The white men had beards on their faces but behind it all you could see their skin was white as a Sunday sheet. And po' Louis' eyes was smoky and hollow and turning in their sockets lak he couldn't help hisself. His mouth stayed open all the time, same lak a man feeling vomit 'bout to come on. And he kept dripping and drooling, and ever' onct in a while he'd rise up his sleeve and wipe it away from his chin.

" 'And oh, how my heart ached to see it all! I squeezed little Eulalie's hand so hard she cried. And Ma pulled her away from me. 'Quit hurting that chile,' she said.

" 'Then Mr. Harris stopped walking around and held up his two cuffed hands, and ever'boday got silent the way you do in the churchyard when the preacher holds up his hand ready to start saying, 'Ashes to ashes and dust to dust.' And then that 'ere murder man he begun to preach loud and strong to all the people. He told 'em about his evil and weeked ways and how he'd repented of all his sins and how ever'boday ort to take warning from what his life had turnt out to be — so that they might 'scape the wroth of God the Saviour and sech woe and turble damnation in the end of their days.

" 'Whilst he went on a-talking a lot of people 'gun to cry lak at a revival

meeting. And I cried myself. I couldn't he'p it. And later it was told that a number of folkses got religion that day and led better lives hencefo'th. One of 'em was old Hezekiah Faulkner. He was a low-down liquor-seller and sinful critter. It was said 'twas him that sold Louis the liquor reg'lar and he furnished the other white men with it. And no doubt the liquor had somep'n to do with their evil doings. Anyhow my daddy said old Hezekiah mought just as well git his hanging along with Louis and t'other. 'Caze Louis fo' a matter of fact was drunk on his liquor the ve'y night he kilt the good white woman.'

"But Hezekiah didn't git his grace there in front of the jailhouse. He was too tough fo' that. It was only when he saw later what happened up on the hill — when he saw the bodies hanging there — that the lesson writ in their death come home to him. Fo'ty years the preachers had been atter old Hezekiah and his moss-backed soul and couldn't fetch him. But that hanging reached him all right, and it reached into the soul of plenty t' others. Say so.

"It was gitting mighty nigh on to'ads eating time now, and the middle of the day. Most ever'body had brung their midday snack but nobody weren't eating yit. The folkses was waiting fo' the hanging. And besides they all felt mighty sick and didn't have much appetite. Purty soon there come a wagon rattling up pulled along by a big stout fat mule and drove by a mop-headed white boy. And in that wagon was three coffins. The people drawed back from in front of it lak it had been a hearse or the horse of death itself come from Satan and the black beyond. The shurff and the deppities they tuk hold of the prisoners and holp 'em up into the wagon. And with the gyards walking along, the wagon started on up thoo the town to'ads Gallows Hill.

"And whilst the wagon rolled along and all of us kep' following atter it, and the dogs too, there Mr. Harris stood up in it with one knee leaning on his own coffin to balance hisself, and he kep' on preaching. And po' Louis he broke into a song, singing it all by hisself. Then the people 'gun to pick it up and they sung with him. I knowed that song the way a lot of other people done, and I've never fo'got it from that day to this un. And ever'time they sings it in the church I thinks 'bout that hanging. And when you hear it, you think 'bout it too. Yeh, you better—

'The lightning flares, the thunders roll,  
The earthquake shakes from pole to pole—  
Oh, Jesus Christ, my living God,  
Make up my dying bed.'

"Soon 'most all the folkses had j'ined in with the singing. But my daddy and my mammy they didn't sing. They was strong hard-shell folks. And up thoo the town we all marched.

‘The rocks and hills melt with the sun  
And man and all his works is done.’

“And the wheels kep’ knocking under the weight of the men and coffins loaded in that wagon, knocking lak in time to that song. And, rocking in my chair many a time since, I’ve heared it knock, knock in my ’membrance still. Finally us mounted up to Gallows Hill on the north edge of the town. And there the scaffold was already built with new boa’d’s and scantling and three new looped ropes hanging down, waiting all in a row. The boy stopped the wagon by the scaffold, and the shurff and the gyards holp the prisoners out and led ’em up the little steps. The three of ’em stood there and the shurff tuk the handcuffs off’n ’em whilst the gyards helt their arms, and then he tied their hands behind ’em. And all the while each one was looking thoo the noose that was right in front of his face. And they was all as meek as little chillun.

“Then the big white preacher, Reverend A. C. Dixon he was, mounted up the steps to preach. You’ve heared people tell ’bout him. He later went ’way crost the ocean water to preach befo’ the king. Well, Reverend Dixon mounted up on the scaffold, and he putt his hand gentle on each of the men. He kep’ his hand longest on Louis’ shoulder, lak maybe he felt more sorry for him. Then he turnt ’round, opened up his Bible and tuk his text — ‘When I would do good, evil is present with me.’

“Mo’n a’ hour he preached to the multitude and he carried two rows at a time on how pride goeth befo’ destruction and a haughty sperit befo’ a fall, and in such an hour as ye know not the Son of Man cometh. Yeh, he said, be sho’ a man’s sins will find you out and there ain’t no hiding place from the wide watching eye of God.

“And ever’body in that vast throng of people hung on his words, drinking of ’em in. But the po’ prisoner criminals kep’ standing there, twisting ’bout ever’ now and then on their ta’hed feets same lak they wished he’d hesh and git it over and done with.

“When finally the sermont was finished, the preacher led in a long prayer. And all over the hillsides and up in the trees people set and stood. Their heads was bowed lak weeping willow trees. Then at the end of the prayer, Reverend Dixon said, ‘Our Father who art in heaven.’ and the hundreds and thousands of people, white and black, j’ined in jest lak chillun in the church on Sunday. And the po’ fellows on the scaffold standing there with their heads bowed, they done so too and so done the shurff and the gyards. Clean ’crost the town and out into the country rolled the great voices of sound, saying, ‘Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, fo’ ever and ever, Amen.’

“Ever’body in that vast mighty multitude was feeling sorrowful and fo’ giving now. My own heart ached lak it couldn’t stand but a little bit mo’,

and I could jest feel that ever'body else's heart was aching and filled with sorrow too. And so much sorrow was ever'where that forgiveness was in all our hearts. Kindness was in people's souls, one to another and 'specially so to'ads the po' condemned ones about to die. And here and there and ever'where bawlings and sobbings 'gun breaking out 'mongst the people. Nobody felt lak hanging nobody now. Ever'body was sorry sich a' awful thing was to be. But still ever' last one of us knowed that the hanging must be. For the law said hang and the law, take it from me, is a' all powerful and fearsome thing. 'Member that.

"The tears were pyore blinding my eyes and I turnt away from the sad sight on the scaffold. Then raight 'crost from me was a young colored man looking off, and there were some water drops on his cheeks also. I looked at him, and he looked around at me — in the dimness of our tears we seen one another, and my heart was aching so with grief I felt nigh to him a stranger, and I fully believed he felt clost to me likewise. I put my hankcher to my eyes to keep from boo-hooing.

"So now I heared the great preacher saying a few low kind words to each of the prisoners. I couldn't understand what he was saying, but I knowed he was comforting of 'em. And in the midmost of it all Louis quick hollered out in a loud voice could be heared clean 'crost Eno River. 'This day, certain to my soul, I'm gwine be with Jesus in Paradise. Yea, in the arms of my loving Saviour — that's where I'm gwine be this day!'

"And from off'n the hillsides and from off'n the little slopes and gullies where the people was crowded, you could hear scattered amens and bless you, brother. And the dogs started barking again.

"Next the shurff and the gyards stepped up and putt black caps on all three of 'em, and there they stood with them black things on 'em looking lak three booger bears or something to scare daylight out'n you on Christmas night.

"Whilst they was doing of this Reverend Dixon reached up his hands high and started a song, leading the people in a great hymn anthem. We sing it in our church still to this day.

'Who is this that comes from far  
With his garments dipped in blood,  
Stray triumphant traveler  
Is he man or is he God?'

"Then all of a suddent lak as if God the Saviour had made answer back, there come from deep underneath the earth to the west a shaking growl and rumble of bad thunder. People looked all about 'em, one at t'other. Seemed lak they was a sign in it or somep'n. Fo' we'd jest been singing when we'd come marching up the hill 'bout the thunder rolling from pole to pole.

"The thunder putt a stop to the singing in the crowd. The preacher

went on a few lines funder and then only him and Louis was singing. And then the preacher stopped, and only Louis was singing. The song coming out from under that black cap give ever'body the shivers, I tell you. The ropes was now putt 'round the necks of the three lost souls. The shurff put up his hand in a sign, and raight spang at the moment the thunder crashed deep and scary once mo'. A trembling run all through the people and I could feel it. Ever'body could feel it, feel that there was something wrong with the happenings of this day. It was lak the great voice of the Almighty from fur down under the earth speaking out against it.

"All the while ever'body was looking at the men on the scaffold. I can still see 'em standing a little knee-bent there. And I was thinking when the thunder sounded 'bout that other old song we used to sing there in Mount Gilead Church.

'Day of wrath, oh day of mourning  
See fulfilled the prophet's warning.'

"And I looked beyont the young colored stranger clost by to the trees 'way to the west and beyont the sycamores along Eno River and the chestnut oaks on top of Occoneechee Mountain. I could see a great roll of thundering clouds coming on up over the world there lak the Jedgment Day itself.

"A lump was in my throat and a kind of sick feeling in my stomach. My mouth kept filling with spettle and I wanted to dump it out. But a young girl wasn't supposed to spet. So I wiped my mouth with my sleeve just the way po' Louis had been doing.

"I looked back at the scaffold and I knowed po' Louis couldn't wipe his mouth now because his hands was tied behind him. And it didn't make no difference nohow fo' the black cap was over his face now and mebbe that would soak it up like bread does gravy.

"The shurff drapped his hand, and the gyard standing below on the ground and behint a plank handle reached out and pulled the handle easy with his hand. And the props flew out lak somep'n had hit 'em. Down fell the trap doors and the men shot thoo 'em same lak rocks you mought drap into the creek. And the preacher jumped back as if he was afeared he mought fall thoo too. I turnt my head away quick to keep from losing my breakfas'.

"At that very pime blank secont, the very secont the handle was pulled and the prisoners fell there come one of the awfulest ripping and tearing crashings of lightning down out'n the sky I'd ever experienced. People screamed and shouted and jumped and turnt around. And a great moaning mumble went out over the multitude. And the dogs just about went wild — gwine away from there. That lightning had struck a big oak tree jest over the brow of the hill, and smoke and bramstone could be seen gwine up the sky where it had struck.

"Yeh, it was jest lak mebbe old Moster that makes the heavens and



the earth and holds 'em in the hollow of his hand — jest lak he'd done spoke with the thunderbolt of his own voice, saying, oh human race, oh human race, the shame and pity of what you's doing!

"And the wiggling of the three men on the ropes 'gun to stop. I couldn't look at 'em but I knowed they was wiggling and I could hear the creakling of the scaffold, the creakling coming stiller and stiller. I looked at people whilst they gazed at the scaffold and I could read in the countenance of their face what was happening, 'specially the young stranger where he kept swallowing by his Adam's apple to keep from crying.

"Then ever'thing got still as death. There was no movement, no noise from all the people, no sound in the air. There was no more lightning nor thunder now. After a minute or two a' easy little wind 'gun blowing lak a sort of blessing over the scene. A light easy wind 'twas. Then with a rush the rain come on — coming 'crost the land lak the trampling of a flock of goats. It struck the crowd in a great gust. I could hear the drops plop-plopping on the scaffold planking and on the shirts of the three bodies hanging from their ropes. And all of a suddent I was hit by a worry 'bout 'em hanging there helpless and gitting wet, lak mebbe they'd ketch their death of cold. Jest for a second so I was.

"Then the people seemed to wake up, the douse of cold rain falling on 'em woke 'em up and brung 'em back out'n the spell of all the turble happenings. They started scattering in all directions lak biddies befo' a hawk, 'fessors, students, ever'body.

"I took a last eye-blink back to'ads the scaffold. There was the three pitiful men hanging all wet and bedraggled and their necks stretched out most half as long as your arm, lak a chicken's neck when you pull it to break it.

"Then it was I turnt r'ally sick. I whirlt 'round looking fo' my mammy, and I sprung quick to run away from there and spang I banged raight into the young colored man. And he put out his arm good and strong and he helt me up and I was shaking and quivering and fit to squall. I looked up at him and he didn't drap his arm but he kep' looking at me and me at him. And I was boo-hooing good and solid now. He smilt at me. All of a suddent I didn't want to run away no mo.' All of a suddent I was fo'getting about the hanging. I wanted him to keep his arm 'round me and hold me up. He kep' looking in my eyes and I looked in hisn, and his arm was strong about me.

"Then I turnt away and he walked 'long with me, helping me thoo the crowd. And my heart was beginning to sing. And it all was so sudden but just natural lak as life. Grief and woe in our two hearts had made it so.

"And that's how I met my husband. Yeh — and all on account o' the hanging."

*hangman's choice*

The choice between two evils, often no choice at all.

*hangman's day*

Friday, an unlucky day for festivities. "Paul and Elizabeth Green didn't get married on Friday, their preferred and most convenient date, because the bride's family declared it too unlucky to be married on Friday, hangman's day."

*the hang of*

The know-how. "As soon as I get the hang of this thing, I can do it."

*hang on by one's eyelashes*

To persist obstinately, to be near to ruin, or death or defeat.

*hang one's head*

Drop the head, to be embarrassed or ashamed.

*hang up one's hat*

To make oneself very much at home.

*hang up one's hide*

To make a spectacle of, to shame or disgrace.

*hanksher (hanketcher)*

Handkerchief.

*if nothing don't happen*

A common phrase in the Valley in reference to some future action or occasion. "If nothing don't happen, I'll be with you Monday morning."  
"If nothing don't happen, we'll have a big get-together."

*happen-so*

Coincidence.

*happy as a Junebug*

*happy as a lark*

*happy as a pig in a puddle*

*happy as doves*

*happy as ducks in a puddle*

We'll be *happy* as we can be  
And never mind the weather  
When your little shoes and my big boots  
Sit under the bed together.  
(A courting rhyme.)

*Happy* is the bride the sun shines on.

'Tis better to be *happy* than wise.

*happy hollers*

Religious frenzy of shouts and yells.

*happy hunting ground*

The Indians' hereafter.

*happy weepings*

Weeping in religious joy.

*harch!*

March! A military command.

*hard*

An erection of the penis. "He's got a hard on."

Quickly, fast. "Go up to Uncle Tom's to borrow some meal and come back hard as you can."

*hard* as a brick

*hard* as a bullet

*hard* as a bull's horns

*hard* as a lightwood knot

*hard* as a rock

*hard* as climbing a greased pole with an armful of eels

*hard* as flint

*hard* as iron

*hard* as nails

*hard* as rowing upstream

*hard* as steel

It's *hard* to pay for bread that's been eaten.

It is *hard* to tie a full sack.

*hard-down*

Fierce. "It was a hard-down fight."

*hard-favored*

Ugly, plain.

as *hardheaded* as a ram

*hard nut to crack*

A difficult job or proposition.

*hard-pushed (hard-run)*

In difficulty, financially embarrassed. "I hear that the Ogburn boys are hard-pushed these days."

*hard row of stumps*

A great difficulty.

*hard row to hoe*

A difficult job.

*Hard Shell Baptists*

This sect believed like the Presbyterians in predestination and election. In the early days they supported neither Sunday schools nor missionaries, and denied musical instruments a part in the church service. To them the fiddle and banjo were devil's instruments and should be abolished. They believed in free-will offerings so far as a minister's salary was concerned. The minister then had to farm or make a living at some trade, never by preaching alone. He took what folks gave him and sent his thanks to God.

*hard to come by*

Obtained with great difficulty. "Don't waste that flour, it's hard to come by."

A large crop of acorns and berries and persimmons is a sign of a *hard winter*.

*to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds*

To be two-faced, to straddle both sides of a question, be hypocritical.

*hare-lip*

A pregnant woman who looks at a rabbit may have a hare-lip baby.

*harking*

Loud, phlegmy coughing.

*Hark, hark*, the dogs do bark,  
The beggars are coming to town.  
Some in rags, and some in jags  
And some in velvet gown.  
  
Some gave them white bread  
And some gave them brown,  
Some gave them a good horse whip  
And run 'em out of town.  
(A nursery rhyme.)

***“Hark, the Herald Angels Sing”***

Perhaps the most popular of all Christmas hymns. The music is by Felix Mendelssohn and the words by Charles Wesley. It used to be our favorite one on Christmas serenades and often the inmates of the house we were serenading in the deep dead of night would raise their windows, or even come out on the porches shivering in their nightdress and join in the singing.

Charles Wesley, the author, was perhaps the most prolific and maybe the best hymn writer that ever lived. Born in England, he came to Georgia with his brother John Wesley, founder of Methodism, as a member of General Oglethorpe's Colony in the 18th century, but soon returned to England. It is said he always carried a notebook with him for there was no telling when a fine line or even a full verse would pop into his mind, and he had to be ready to put it down before it escaped.

Among the more than four thousand hymns Charles Wesley wrote, there are, in addition to “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing,” the fine “Rejoice, the Lord Is King” and “Jesus, Lover of my Soul.”

“Hark, the herald angels sing,  
 ‘Glory to the new born King—  
 Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
 God and sinners reconciled.’

“Joyful all ye nations rise,  
 Join the triumph of the skies.  
 With angelic hosts proclaim  
 ‘Christ is born in Bethlehem.’ ”

*harmless* as doves

*harm word*

Backbiting, evil gossip. “I’ve never said a harm word about him in all my life.”

*to harp*

To scold, to repeat to wearisomeness.

*to harp on one string*

To have only one cause, one subject of talk or interest, be boring.

*Old Harry*

The devil.

*hash*

Existence, willpower, personality. “If that fellow fools with me, I’ll go up there and settle his hash.”

*haslet*

The liver, heart, and lights of slaughtered animals — hogs, sheep, beeves.  
“I give that man a haslet and he didn’t even thank me.”

*hassel*

The panting of a dog. “That dog was hasseling like he couldn’t get his wind.”

*Haste* makes waste, and waste makes want, and want makes strife between a good man and his wife.

*Give me time to get my hat.*

Don’t hurry me.

*My hat!*

A strong assertion.

*talk through one’s hat*

To talk foolishness, nonsense.

*bad hat*

A misfit, an unreliable person.

*hat burning*

A custom in certain parts of North Carolina, of a father’s burning his hat at the birth of a first son to insure good luck for the child as he grows up.

An acquaintance of mine, that ardent and gifted folklorist, Mrs. Maud Minish Sutton, told of her experience once in connection with this belief. She and a companion stopped at a little farmhouse for a drink of water and to rest a bit from their labors.

“I didn’t notice anything very unusual around the place,” she said, “but we entered at a most inopportune time. A new baby had just arrived, and there were some six or eight old women in the one room — a lovely shy-eyed mother, not one day over sixteen — and several men out at the woodpile. I went into the room, exclaimed over the big fine baby, and learned a custom that must be perfectly local. The father, a big awkward boy around eighteen, came in with three old hats in his hand. He addressed me thus — ‘Woman, is they any use o’ burnin’ up all my hats jes’ ’cause this here is a boy?’

“An old woman who appeared to be the head of things spoke up sternly. ‘Course they’s use o’ burnin’ yore hats! If the first boy has any bit o’ luck his pap’s hats has to burn in the fire. My mammy before me followed the babyfetching and she said their daddies burnt hats for all their first boys. Nobody ever acted stingy with their hats before around here, Jim, except Rial Edwards for his boy and Rial kept back a big hat he’d jest bought, and of all the trifling, no ’count, dirt-eating young’uns ever I seen his’n is the worst. Don’t act the fool, Jim. Throw them hats in.’

"Jim still hesitated. 'Hit looks right plumb foolish,' he said. I stole a glance toward the bed, two big tears were stealing furtively down the cheeks of the pretty girl mother. 'Honey,' said the new father very tenderly, 'do you want my hats burnt?' 'I want my baby to have some chance,' she said.

" 'Seeing her suffer like you see her, Jim, shore looks to me like you'd give up them ole hats,' said the old lady contemptuously.

"The boy pitched his hats into the blazing log fire. 'You know it twan't stinginess, honey,' he said to his wife, 'hit jest looks foolish.' "

### *down the hatch*

Down the throat, gullet. Often said preparatory to swallowing a shot of liquor.

### *hate*

To be unwilling, deplore, dislike doing. "I hate to do it, son, but I've got to whip you for stealing my liquor."

Regret. "I hated to hear that your house had been robbed, Mr. Paul."

### *hateful*

An irritating person. "She's a little old hateful."

### *hat-holding*

Obsequious, subservient. "He's a hat-holding guy hoping for a government job."

### *hat in hand*

Humble, submissive.

### *ha'th*

Hearth.

### *hat trick*

A ruse, a deceit, cheating.

### *hats off*

Respect, honor.

### *haul freight*

Leave, run away, go fast, vamoose.

### *haul in one's horns*

Quit bragging, lower one's sights, eat crow.

### *haul off*

To act quickly. "He hauled off and hit me."

### *haul over the coals*

To berate, to scold. Also "haul onto the carpet."

*haunted house (place)*

A house or place where a ghostly apparition may be seen, usually at the same hour and most often at night.

*have a bear by the tail*

To be in a most difficult position, to have a job bigger than one can handle.

*have all one's buttons*

To be in good form, clever, quick-witted.

*have a place for everything and have everything in its place*

*have a (great) mind to*

To feel inclined to some action.

*have by the balls*

To have complete control of. "L. B. J. had this country by the balls."

*have on*

To wear, to be dressed in. "That's a purty dress you have on."

*have other fish to fry*

To have other concerns, business, than the present one.

*have the goods on*

To have clear evidence or proof of one's actions, usually of guilt.

*'havior*

Behavior.

*haw*

To go left.

*hawk*

A fierce person, a war-minded one, an ultra-conservative.

An outlook or watch set by thieves or gangsters to warn of the police coming.

*Hawk and Chickens*

A children's chase game.

The "mother hen" has her brood of "chickens" lined up behind her. The "hawk" is intent on catching the "chickens" one by one and adding them to its side. So the contest begins, the "hawk" trying to elude the "mother hen" to grab one of the chickens. Each one that is caught joins the "hawk" group.

*hawk caller*

A folk toy. A wildwood little flute-like caller, often spoken of as a blate, made by splitting the end of a green twig, inserting a cut slip of a leaf, usually



a red oak leaf, and laid against the lips and blown with a shrill little crying sound, much like a hawk's call.

Make *hay* while the sun shines.

*haymaking*

Loose love-making, frolicking in the hay.

*Hay Over*

A chasing ball game. See "Heigh Over."

*hayrides*

Rides that young people used to take on a wagon loaded with hay. What fun we had on these rides, singing and joking away. Perfect for courting and snuggling in the dark.

He hits the nail on the *head*.

soft in the *head*

Easily taken in, deceived, sentimentally kind, silly.

A *cool head* and warm feet live long.

Little *head*, big wit;

Big *head*, not a bit.

have a *head* for

To be talented in one direction.

*head full of sense*

An especially sharp, discerning, practical person.

*head-hunter*

A fiercely matrimonially inclined female.

*heading*

A bolster, a pillow. "I didn't have enough heading last night and couldn't sleep."

*head in the sand*

To be dull, stupid, uncaring.

*eat one's head off*

To be gluttonous.

*head of the heap*

The leader.

*head of the house (table)*

The head man, the boss, the one who leads. There's an old Scotch saying in the Valley that "Where McGregor sits is the head of the table." Neck

McGregor used to boastfully say this of himself, but he later changed his tune.

I knew Neck a little while before he died. He got his nickname from Civil War times. One day in 1865 Sherman's Yankee bummers rushed up to his farm down there on Lower Little River and captured him. He wouldn't tell where his horses and silverware were hid so they hung him up by the neck the way they later did the Harnett County poet George W. Miller. Then they cut him down alive and still he wouldn't tell. Later on some more of Sherman's bummers came by and hanged him again but he wouldn't tell. Maybe he couldn't tell. Maybe he didn't have any silverware. The truth is I guess he didn't have any horses or silverware by this time, for it all had gone into the Southern cause, he being a mighty patriotic fellow and looking up to General Lee as next to God. Finally a third gang of Yankee guerrillas came by and hanged him a third time and that nearly ended him. They left him for dead but some of the neighbors arrived in time to cut him down and revive him. From that day on, though, he walked with a crooked neck and with his head turned slanchindicular. So about all he got out of working for the Confederate cause was a maiming for life and the nickname "Neck." That name fitted him right on up to the end, and he quit using the boastful old saying. One day on his way to MacDonald's Mill with a bag of corn he met a few old Confederate soldiers coming around the bend on horses. They were on their way to Fayetteville for a reunion and were carrying a Confederate flag held high and proud before them. The flag flapping in the wind and the troops coming around the curve so suddenlike scared Neck's mule and he ran away with him, throwing him out of the wagon and on his head and killing him. This time his neck was really broken.

### *head of water*

A supply of water sufficient for water-mill grinding.

### *Heads I win, tails you lose.*

A catch, a mock wager.

### *heads or tails*

A tossed coin is used to decide first go, for instance. One leader calls "heads," another "tails," and the one who is matched by the top surface of the falling coin is the winner.

### *can't make heads or tails out of it*

Completely puzzled.

Two *heads* are better than one.

Two *heads* are better than one, even if one is a cabbage head.

Two *heads* are better than one, or why do folks marry?

It's hard to put *old heads* on young shoulders.

*head the yearling*

To end, win over, to defeat, overleap or surpass. "Well, suh, all I can say is that really heads my yearling."

*headwork* before handiwork*heal all*

An aromatic plant common to fields, woods and waste places especially, in almost all of North America. It is also known as blue curls. A decoction from it was supposed to be good for anything, hence its name.

*health springs*

Before and especially after the Civil War the custom of going to the springs for one's health was widespread. For some days, a week or two maybe, the people would drink plentifully of the water and go back home refreshed and "cleaned out." The being cleaned out had more meanings than one, for a lot of secret card playing and gambling went on. Some of the springs had commodious hotels, equipped with every sort of guest comfort including brass bands.

The springs nearest my home were Chalybeate, Holly, and Fuquay — all of small vintage if that's the word. The most popular was Fuquay Springs, and huge crowds gathered there at Easter and the Fourth of July.

The springs are all pretty much forgot now, and the hotels and race tracks have long ago disappeared. What hastened the early abandonment of Fuquay Springs in particular was that some years ago the word got out that General Sherman's forces had buried a lot of old wornout mules and horses above the spring, and surely the water was contaminated thereby. Too late to vomit. But quit, everyone did.

*he-animal*

Bull. Many persons in the Valley, especially women, are so prudish or timid that they won't use the word "bull." They will say "animal" instead. The same applies to "boar" or "stud." "Mr. Harmon's got a new he-animal in his pasture, and he sure looks dangerous."

*heaping full*

More than level, overflowing.

*hear*

For emphasis. "Come see us, hear."

*hearn*

Heard.

*heart*

Kindness. "He's got no heart in him."

The solid, unsappy center of a tree.

*by heart*

Memorized. "I knowed it by heart once, but now I've forgot it."

*Have a heart.*

To have kind feelings, to be merciful.

*hear tell*

Rumored. "I hear tell John Edwards is gonna get married."

*hear the birds sing*

To be looney, cuckoo.

*heart in one's mouth*

Afraid, intense suspense. "On that third strike my heart was in my mouth."

*heartleaf*

An aromatic Valley plant, wild ginger. Poultices from the leaves are used to heal cuts.

*hear to it*

To agree, acquiesce in, heed.

*Hearts* like doors open with ease  
To very, very little keys.  
And don't forget that two of these  
Are "Thank you, sir," and "If you please."  
(A proverb rhyme.)

*heathen*

Any people on earth who are not Christians; usually the Valley people had in mind the folks in Asia.

*heave-ho*

To be thrown out, unceremoniously dismissed. "I got the old heave-ho and now I'm looking for a job."

*Heaven*

Opposite of hell. The place of supernal delight, usually supposed to be somewhere up in the sky, as hell is supposed to be below the earth somewhere.

*Heaven* helps those who help themselves.

*Heavenly days!*

*Heavens!*

*Good Heavens!*

*Merciful Heavens!*

*Heavens above!*

*Heavens to Betsy!*

Interjections.

*heavies*

Winter underwear.

The *heaviest* ear of corn hangs its head the lowest.*heavy*

Wet, sticky, moisture laden. "I ploughed my corn when the ground was too heavy, and now look at it, it's turned yellow as gold."

*heavy* as a ton of bricks*heavy* as lead*heavy-arsed*

Slow, lazy, lethargic.

*Heavy dew* means fair weather to come.*heavysome*

Dull, sad, despondent.

*Hebrew*

Mysterious, indecipherable, not understood. "He explained, but it was all Hebrew to me."

*heck*

A mild expletive, same as what the heck, aw heck, etc.

*to heck and gone*

A long distance, out of sight and mind, or completely obliterated.

*for the heck of it*

For the dare of it, just to be doing it.

*since Heck was a pup*

A long time, much the same as coon's age or blue moon.

*he-cow*

A prudish assertion for a bull.

*hedge preacher*

An illiterate, loud-mouthed evangelist, a great pest, not only to the Valley, but to the world at large.

Let him that thinketh he standeth take *heed* lest he fall.*heel it*

To run, same as hoof it.

*turn heel*

To turn and leave, to betray, to change one's direction suddenly, much the same as "turn tail."

*cool one's heels*

To wait apprehensively for some decision, to be forced to waste time waiting.

*to hang by one's heels*

To be completely ruined, to be made helpless. "When the stock market blew up, it left him hanging by his heels."

*heel-string*

Leg tendon. "Mr. Pendergraft was sawing wood last Monday when that chain saw grabbed his leg and cut his heel-string in two."

*heerd*

Past tense of hear.

*heft*

The might, the strength. "The heft of him was scareful."

The handle. "Take that shovel by the heft."

*He (it, she) has had it.*

Worn out, incapacitated, done for.

*He has need* of a long spoon that sups with the devil.

*He hath liv'd ill* that knows not how to die well.

*heifer*

A young girl.

*open heifer*

A prostitute or sexually loose woman.

*heifer den*

A brothel.

*heifer dust*

A common, low woman. We used to call our boarding housekeeper at Chapel Hill heifer dust. Why I don't know, for she was a kind, nice person, as far as I knew.

*heigh*

A form of address.

*Heigh Over!*

A ball game, same as Hail Over.

The players are divided as equally as possible. They take positions on

opposite sides of a building. A player on the side with the ball calls out "Heigh over!" and the ball is thrown over the house as far as possible. When it is caught on the fly or on first bounce, the side now with the ball comes tearing around the house and the one with the ball tries to hit one of the opposing players, even chasing him down before he can escape around the house. If he hits an opponent, that one now joins his side. The game continues till all the players have been brought over to one side or till the weaker side gives in and calls it quits or in our old parlance calls out "Calf-ropes!"

The *heights* by great men reached and kept  
 Were not obtained by sudden flight  
 But they while their companions slept  
 Were toiling upward in the night.

### *heir*

Inherit a share or part of an inheritance. "Since Dode heired that money from his uncle, he ain't worth a continental."

### *held up*

Delayed, hindered, stopped. "I would-a been here sooner but some company came in and I was held up."

### *hell*

A mild swear word.

Torment, Hades, the bad place, the fiery lake, the everlasting fire, a place believed in by most fundamentally religious people where those who die in sin and unknowing of Jesus and his salvation must suffer forever, burning in flames seven times hotter than ordinary fire on earth. Even the innocent children of the Orient who never had any chance to hear of Jesus — according to orthodox Christian faith — these poor innocent ones must burn forever in the flames because they were not saved by believing in Jesus Christ.

This cruel nonsense reminds me of a dialogue I recently had with a deacon in one of the Valley churches.

"You mean, John, that you believe those millions and millions, hundreds of millions of little children of other nations far away who have not known of Jesus, could not know of Jesus because millions of them lived before he even was born, you mean to say that they are lost forever and must suffer the torments of hell."

"Well, it's just too bad, but that's the way the Bible has it, and I believe the Bible. And it says 'Woe unto those that don't believe.' "

"Yes, I know, I know, but don't you think this is a terrible bloodthirsty thing to believe in? You can't imagine any god could be so cruel, can you?"

"I believe in God and I believe in Jesus Christ and him crucified, and I believe in the Bible which says 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and him

crucified and ye shall be saved' and woe unto those who do not believe."

"Yes, yes, I see, I see. Well, I guess there's no use arguing, because I could never believe in such a doctrine, and I couldn't believe in such a bloodthirsty god."

"Yes, and it's too bad for you, just as it's too bad for them little children, and I know when you die where you are going."

"Yes, I know, John, the chances are we won't go to the same place, will we?"

"No, we won't. I know where I'm going, because I believe in the Father and his Son and I believe in the Holy Ghost, and I try to live right, try to live by my faith."

"I try to live right, too, John."

"But you can't live right if you don't believe in the Lord. No, you can't, and I want you to know that I've prayed for you night after night, many a year I've prayed for you. It don't look like, though, it's doing any good a-tall."

"No, it doesn't, John, it doesn't look as if the great Master in the sky is hearing you."

"He hears me, all right, the thing is you don't hear Him. Well, you've had your chance and you're still here looking hale and hearty. And you've still got a chance, but in such an hour as you know not, then he'll call for you, and, oh Lord, it breaks my heart to think that you won't be ready."

"I'm sorry to cause you trouble, John, very sorry. Don't let your heart ache over me. I don't reckon I'm worth it according to your view."

"Yes, you're worth it, because the Bible does say that all are precious in the sight of God, and you're precious in my sight, too, and I do wish you could see the true faith and believe in it."

"I don't guess there's much chance, John, not much chance of my believing in the kind of god that we've been talking about."

And again the stern comment, "That's just too bad for you. I'll pray for you, yes, I will, but I misdoubt it will do any good. Repent now before it's too late."

And to keep the deacon from kneeling and beginning his prayer for me right there, I changed the subject to the pennant race between the Orioles and the Dodgers baseball clubs. Like me, the lost one, the deacon loves baseball, and so we had a good and cheerful talk after all and shook hands friendly-wise when we parted.

*Hell* is paved with good intentions.

*gone to hell*

Shot to hell, all to pieces, undone, made a mess of, broken up.



*like hell*

An expression of intensity in comparison.

*go to hell in a basket*

To go recklessly to hell.

*hellaceous*

Hellish.

*to hell and gone*

Wild behavior, a wasteful result.

*hell-bent for election*

Moving fast, at great speed.

*hell-bent for leather*

Wildly intended, pushing on with all one's might.

*hell driver*

An auto racer.

*hell-fired*

Extremely hellish, a phrase for emphasis.

*till hell freezes over*

A long time, much longer than a coon's age. "I'll hold to my views till hell freezes over."

*hellhounds (Gabriel's hounds)*

There is a superstition in the Valley that hellhounds can be heard crossing the sky and barking fiercely as an omen of death. "Yes, sir," said Aunt Etta, "I was out there in the pink of the morning, hoeing in my cabbage, when I heard them hellhounds coming way off, and they come nigher and nigher and crossed the sky right overhead, and they went right in the direction of Uncle Jim's house and they faded out when they seemed to get to his house. I told my man, Sandy, at breakfast, 'Sandy,' I said, 'Uncle Jim is dead, I done heerd the hellhounds barking in the sky and barking all around above his house, and he's dead.' And so he was."

*helling*

Creating a disturbance, speeding recklessly.

*hell of a note*

An intensive description, something extraordinary.

*hello girl*

A telephone operator.

*hell on wheels*

A reckless, wild, uncontrollable person.

*come hell or high water*

No matter what difficulty, in spite of everything, extreme hardships, etc.

*hell's bells!*

An interjection.

*hell's gate*

A woman's cunt.

*helm*

Helve.

If you can't *help*, don't hinder.

as *helpless* as a baby

*help my life!*

An exclamation.

"Every little bit *helps*," said the old woman as she pissed in the sea.

"Every little bit *helps*," said the old woman as she farted in the whirlwind.

*he-man stuff*

Rough male treatment, cave man methods.

*hemispheres*

A woman's breasts.

*to stretch hemp*

To be hanged on the gallows.

*hemp widow*

A woman widowed by her husband's being hanged.

A black *hen* lays white eggs.

A setting *hen* is never fat.

It is a sorry house in which the cock is silent and the *hen* crows.

*henbit*

A nettle, also known as bee nettle, found in rich wastelands from late February to October. Used as a laxative.

*hen fruit*

Eggs.

*Mr. Henry*

A derisive rhyme. We used to substitute any teacher we wanted when we recited this rhyme.

“Mr. Henry, he’s a good teacher,  
Teaches scholars now and then.  
When he whips them, makes them dance  
Out of England into France.”

Setting *hens* don’t want fresh eggs.

*hen-scratches (tracks)*

Crude, almost indecipherable handwriting. “I can’t make heads or tails of all them hen-scratches.”

*hepatica*

An early flowering woodland plant, abundant in the Valley, as in most of America. South Dakota has chosen it as its state flower. Also known as liverwort. Its lobed leaves are livershaped, and “hepatica” means liver. Used for liver complaints and also for fevers and coughs.

*hep to*

To be privy to, to have knowledge of, suited to, in the know.

*herb doctor*

Much the same as conjure doctor or root doctor. A folk practitioner of hocus pocus, cures and spells, still widely believed in by most people. Innumerable stories are current about them. For instance, not long ago Zonie, the young Negro man who works with me, was telling me of some herb or root doctor cures he knew about.

Two of them were especially striking. We were cleaning up our yard and had to go out to Sam Lloyd’s in the country to get a little mowing machine. As we drove along we passed a run-down filling station kept by a Negro man. The Negro man was sitting on a bench leaning against the wall.

“Look-a there at him,” said Zonie. “His name is Jackson Long. Stingy — oh, my Lord! I owed him one cent once and ’cause I didn’t get back on Monday morning to pay him, he told all around in the neighborhood that Zonie Lippert couldn’t nohow be trusted.”

“You mean one cent, Zonie?”

“Mean one cent. But that’s the way it is,” he went on, as we drove up the road. “A man can save and scrimp and scrounge like that, and then bad luck comes and gits him. Last week he had twenty-five hundred dollars in his pocket and he went down to the ’Sociation meeting. Twenty-five hundred dollars!”

“Gracious,” I said, “why would he go around with that much money

in his pocket?"

"He sold off a piece of land to Mr. Dode Jones, and it being Saturday night he couldn't go to the bank in Carrboro 'til Monday morning. And he didn't want to go to the 'Sociation and leave it in his ramshackly old filling station for fear somebody would take it. So he had it on him in his pocket. And what you reckon happened to him? Why, somebody spelled him while he was there and just got that money right away from him. Yessuh, hypnotized him, got him in a daze with his devil's eye, and he ain't never going to see nary a brownie of it any more."

"What do you mean, hypnotized him?" I queried.

"Just that, Mr. Green — spelled him. Aw, the people works spells on you through this country here round and about."

"Zonie, you don't believe that."

"Shore, I believe it. Take that house right over there we're passing. There was a fellow in there — lived there once but moved up North now. He had the worst spell a-tall. His name was Hub. I used to play with him. Him and me was about the same age. Well, sir, somebody had it in for him. Might have been a girl, for all I know. Anyhow they fed him some juice or something out of a Co'-cola bottle, and it had a spell in it. And you know what? That boy had snakes all under his skin. You could see the pattern of 'em. I've looked at his arm many a time and there you could see the shape of the snakes in his skin."

"You mean you really saw the snakes?"

"Yessuh, I've seen 'em. And he got worse and worse. And his mammy and daddy and the neighbors met together and said there weren't no doubt about it at all — they had to take him to that herb doctor up there beyond. Maybe you've heard of him."

"No. What is an herb doctor, Zonie?"

"With all your knowledge and you don't know that! Lord, Mr. Green. Well, some people calls 'em root doctors, dust-doctors. Sometimes they have a herb root with a spell on it they can work strange things with. Then again some of 'em has dust out of the graveyard, from the grave of a man that's been hanged or burnt in the electric chair. Well, that's what they are — call 'em root doctors or dust doctors."

"How do they get their power, Zonie?"

"Well, sir, the best way to get it is out'n a black cat, one in which they ain't nary a speck of white. Take you a iron pot of hot scalding water and put that cat in there alive and jam a led on it. And then you hop up and stand on that led. And you stand there all the whilst the flesh is b'iling away from that cat's bones. It may jounce and jimmy under your feet, but you just keep standing on the pot. Then when the bones is all fleshened away, you take 'em out and put 'em in a basket. And you go to the creek where there's plenty of swift-running water. You dash all them bones right spang

into that swift-running water. And the bone that swims up the creek, that's your man. You grab it, and you keep the bone. From then on you got the power."

"I reckon so, if you think of a bone swimming up stream," I laughed.

"Yes sir, that's what I'm thinking of, 'cause some of 'em do. And that Mayben root doctor he had one of them bones. With that bone he would go out in the woods. And any place he come nigh where there was a good root, that bone would move in his pocket and cut up terrible. All he had to do was dig down there and get that root. Then he could cut a piece of it and put it in a handkerchief and sell it to you for two dollars and a half. And if you wanted a girl to come to you — with that root in your handkerchief she'd come. Or if a girl wanted a boy to come to her, she could just touch the root she had and make her wish, and he'd have to come, too.

"It was a girl lived back down there got one them things. Ugly she was and spraddle-teefied. And bless your soul, where she hadn't had a fellow looking at her before, now they just stood lined up in front of her house waiting to git in, after she got that piece of root.

"As I was going to say — this Hub fellow, he got these snake spells on him. And the mother and the father and the neighbors said we got to take him to that herb doctor at Mayben. Well, they went up there to see the herb doctor, and he said it'll cost you a hundred and eighty-seven dollars.

"That raily shocked 'em. They didn't have no hundred and eighty-seven dollars. They pled and they begged him to do something for their poor Hub anyhow, but the herb doctor said — no pay, no taking the spell off, and it's cheap at that. So they come away with Hub back home. And Hub got worse and worse.

"One day there was a big heavy rain and Hub went out of the house into the gyarden with a couple of tow sacks. He loaded them tow sacks with wet gyarden dirt and tuk one sack under one arm and one under the other and come into the house. And he emptied the dirt out on the kitchen floor. 'Look here, Mama,' he said, 'at the money we got. We got plenty of money, Mama. You take half and Papa take half and I take half.' And he mixed his hands all down in that dirt, his face shining like he was handling gold.

" 'Shut yo' mouth, boy,' his muh yelled out. 'You're plumb crazy as a bed bug. That ain't no money. That's plain old gyarden dirt.'

" 'It ain't gyarden dirt, it ain't,' he said. 'It's money, Mama, money — and you can pay the herb doctor at Mayben. And he'll get me well — get them snakes off'n me.' And with that word 'snakes' he begun to squeal and shout and hop up and down.

"His mammy was so outdone with him she tuk a handful of that dirt and swabbed it smack into his mouth. 'That's money for you!' she said. Well, that seemed to raily upset Hub, for he tore out of the room and run upstairs, yelling as loud as he could. And there the snakes went to work

on him to a fare-you-well — so hard that he jumped spang out of the window into the hard yard ground, and when he hit the ground, he hit it running. There was an old bicycle he used to ride laying up against the house had two flat tires. He jumped straddle of that bicycle and tore off down the road trying to outrun them snakes. His mammy yelled for his pappy, and he come in from the field. He got his little old pickup Ford, and him and the mammy hopped in and started after Hub. Well, sir they got that Ford pickup where it was popping off, but that boy clean went away from there and left 'em behind — yessir, on that old bicycle with them two flat tires. And when he rounded the curve down there coming into Carrboro he was making such speed that bicycle threwed him for a loop. End over end he went through the air and landed in the middle of a big grape vine out in somebody's field. And he got tangled up in the vine, and so his mammy and daddy ketched him.

“Then they sont him off to Goldsboro to that 'sylum place, him whimpering and a-crying not to go. People felt sorry for him, the mammy and the neighbors did, and they all got together and raised a hundred and eighty-seven dollars. And they tuk it up to that herb doctor at Mayben and says — ‘Here, Mr. Doctor-man, is a hundred and eighty-seven dollars — get poor Hub back home again.’ And the doctor tuk the hundred and eighty-seven dollars and said — ‘Your boy is well!’

“And shore enough, he was. Down in Goldsboro they checked, and at the same minute that the doctor said them words, Hub come to hisself in his natcheral mind.

“They went and got him and brung him home, and he had plenty of good sense from that day on. He weren't never bothered by snakes no more. Later on he moved up North. They say he's doing well up there — married and got a family. Yes sir, just the way the herb doctor said, a hundred and eighty-seven dollars, and cheap at that.”

On another day when we were driving back to town after a visit to my farm out in Chatham County, we passed a little house set off in a field. Zonie pointed to it.

“You see that house, Mr. Green? There was a girl lived in that had a bad spell on her. I knowed her. Yes sir, she begun to waste away, and there was nothing they could do for her. Somebody, they couldn't tell who it was, had a spell on her, wasting her away. She'd sit around the house and mope and say nothing, all drooped up like a sick pullet. And her mammy went off to see that herb doctor at Mayben. He looked at her and said, ‘It'll cost you a hundred and eighty-seven dollars for me to cyore your daughter, and cheap at that.’ The poor woman didn't have no hundred and eighty-seven dollars, and she come back home all discouraged like. And the girl kept wasting away. Just like in the case of Hub I told you about, people got together and took pity on her and at the church they took up a collection several Sundays, and the mammy washed and hoed and made a few dollars

here and there. Finally they got it all together and went to see the doctor at Mayben.

“ ‘I’ll have to come down and see what I can do,’ he says. ‘This here’s a special case. How old is she?’ ”

“ ‘And so he did, riding up in a Buick car with a fat yellow boy driving him. And he looked the premises over. Then he looked at the girl and had her to open her mouth, and he looked in the pa’m of her hands and felt her good. He shook his head mighty mournful-like. ‘There ain’t no doubt about it,’ he said. ‘She’s got a bad spell on her.’ Well sir, that doctor had a little thing in his hand, a kind of wooden thing about the size of a yo-yo with a long needle sticking out of it. And he went round the house with his head bent over holding that thing out in front of him. And, all of a sudden, that needle says ‘py-an-ng!’ and it shot right out from that piece of wood and out of sight into the ground. ”

“ ‘Bring a shovel,’ the doctor hollered. ‘Here’s where you dig.’ And they dug, and down about two feet they found a little bottle lying on its side there with a cork loose in it. The doctor took that bottle out and held it up in the light. It had just a little bit of juice in it. ”

“ ‘That’s what was killing of her,’ he said. ‘Whilst this juice leaked out her life was oozing away. We got here just in time, for there’s just about enough to last another day. Then she’d a-been gone from here to come no more.’ So he remmed the stopper in tight and put the bottle back in the hole right end up — ‘to rest there,’ he said, ‘till the judgment day.’ And they filled the dirt back in. And when they’d done that, the girl shook herself, broke out all of a sudden in a happy smile and laughed. ”

“ ‘I feel better right now,’ she said. And so she got well and mended fast. Yes sir, say what you please, them herb doctors got power, and if I ever get a spell on me, I’m sure going to raise me up a hundred and eighty-seven dollars and pay one of ’em — and cheap at that.”

### *herbs*

Money.

### *hereafter*

The other world after death. This other world, according to the orthodox Christian belief, is one of felicity or one of suffering. A man may be morally upright and one without any ethical wrong-doing and still be lost in the hereafter unless he has accepted Jesus Christ as his personal savior and has been forgiven of his sins and, somehow in a mysterious way, has received the grace that St. Paul talks so volubly about.

*Here*, a little child, I stand,  
Heaving up my either hand.  
Cold as paddocks though they be,

Lord, I lift them up to thee  
For a benison to fall  
On our food and on us all.  
(Child's prayer,  
Robert Herrick 1591-1674)

*here's hoping*

Here's looking at you, here's how, a toast preparatory to taking a drink.

*Here I stand* both fresh and fair,  
Dark brown eyes and curly hair,  
Rosy cheeks and dimpled chin,  
A warm little heart that beats within.

*Here* I stand upon a stump  
Come and kiss me 'fore I jump.

*Here* I stand on two dry chips.  
Come and kiss me on the lips.

*Here* I stand all fat and chunky,  
Ate a duck and swallowed a monkey.  
(Recitation rhymes.)

*Here's* mud in your eye.  
A jocular toast.

*here today and gone tomorrow*

An irresponsible person, also said of some possession or cherished thing.

*hern*

Hers.

*her'n*

Heron.

*a dead herring*

A perished cause or purpose, something that's outmoded.

*drag a herring over* (usually a red herring)

To confuse, to keep secret, to hide away.

*hesh*

Hush.

*He skipped the lean* and ate the fat  
And that soon put him where he's at.  
(A proverb.)



*het*

Past tense of heat.

*He that blows dust* fills his own eyes.

*He that dies* pays all debts.

*He that fights* and runs away may live to fight another day.

*He that goes a-borrowing* goes a-sorrowing.

*He that is down* need fear no fall.

*He that pays the piper* calls the tune.

*He that will not* when he could, cannot when he would.

*He that will not* when he may, when he would will find it nay.

*het up*

Angry, all fired up.

*Hew* to the line and let the chips fall where they may.

*hewers of wood and drawers of water*

The common people, the lowest sort, working class.

*He who blows his own horn* hurts other people's ears.

*He who does what he should not*, in time will suffer what he would not.

*Hey, diddle-diddle*

The cat and the fiddle,

The cow jumped over the moon.

The little dog laughed to see such sport

And the dish ran away with the spoon.

(Nursery rhyme.)

*hiccups*

There are many folk cures given for hiccups. One cure is to put a cold knife on the back of the hiccupper or have him stoop over, pick up a rock, spit under the rock and then stand up straight, or hold his breath and count to ten, or have some surprising, frightful news told him, even as a joke. Any sudden surprise or fright is supposed to stop the hiccups. Still another cure is to be able to say the following rhyme thus—

“Hiccup, hiccup,  
Rise up, rise up,  
Three sucks in the teacup  
Is good for the hiccups.”

To repeat this three times in rapid succession without a single hiccup will give a certain cure. Also, if one takes nine swallows of water, saying between each swallow, "hiccup, hiccup," this will help to cure the hiccups. A teaspoon of sugar held in the mouth until it dissolves cures the hiccups. An old woman told me once to hold my hands above my head and that would cure the hiccups. I don't remember now whether it did or not.

*Hickory*, dickory dock,  
The mouse ran up the clock.  
The clock struck one.  
The mouse ran down,  
Hickory, dickory dock.

(A recitation rhyme, also used  
sometimes as a counting-out rhyme.)

Burn a *hickory log* and make a poultice of the ashes for shingles.

### *hickory nuts*

The fruit of the hickory tree. In late fall we children used to have great fun going into the woods with buckets or tow sacks and gathering the nuts that had fallen to the ground, most of them already hulled or partly hulled from striking the earth. And then came the cracking by the fireside and digging the goodies out.

### *hickory shirt*

A tough working shirt most often made of blue denim cloth.

### *hickory whetrock*

The best of all possible whetstones, according to a Valley legend, but legendary only. There is no such thing. But when I was a little boy, I was told by an old colored man, Uncle Reuben (See "Ku Klux Klan"), that if I put a piece of hickory wood in a creek where the water ran swiftly and let it stay there a week or so it would turn into a whetrock. I tried it, and for a week beat a path to the creek. No whetrock. Finally I got disgusted and quit.

*Hickory wood* makes the best fire for curing barbecue, smoking meat and also for courting.

### *Hide and Seek*

One of the most popular of all children's hiding and running games, much the same as "I Spy." "It" is agreed on or chosen by a counting-out rhyme. A home base is selected, usually a tree. "It" counts, say, up to a hundred, and the other players hide the while. At the end of the counting "It" usually calls out — we did when we played it — "Bushel of wheat, bushel of clover, all ain't hid can't hide over! Coming, ready or not."

And then the search for the hidden players would begin. If a player succeeded in reaching home base before "It" could touch him, he was "home free" and usually called out the fact when he made it. The last one found was usually "It" for the next hiding, though sometimes we chose to let the one who got home free first have that honor.

*play hide and seek*

To tease, lead one on.

*hidebound*

Narrow-minded, provincial person.

*Hide the Thimble (Button)*

A popular children's game. All the players except the one who is to be "It" leave the room. The thimble, or some other small object like a button or a coin, is hid then in some out of the way place, but not under or behind anything. It must always be in plain view, much like Edgar Allan Poe's purloined letter. Then "It" calls the other players in, and they begin to hunt for the thimble. When one of the players is very close to the object, he can call out "Am I hot?", and if not, "It" can say, "You're cold," etc. And sometimes "It" can encourage a player by saying, "You're getting warm." And when one finally finds the thimble, he usually calls out, "Here it is" or "I found it." Then he becomes the "It" for the next game.

*high* as a Georgia pine

*high as a kite*

Hilariously drunk.

*high as the sky*

No limit.

*highball*

A sign of goodbye. "He gimme the highball and left."

*high blood*

High blood pressure. "My sister's got the high blood and can't work a lick."

*high cotton*

In good shape, financial security. "I'm living in high cotton now — I'm on Uncle Sam's payroll," said civil servant Jones.

The *higher* one climbs the more of his behind he shows. (I have heard that this was one of Woodrow Wilson's favorite old proverbs.)

The *higher* they climb the farther they fall.

*high feather*

Gleeful feelings.

*high jinks*

Pretentious doings, show-off proceedings.

*highly height*

Over-proud, superior. "Give my dogs cornbread and, man, they're highly height." Mrs. Atlee Neville, who has been with us for forty years, says this was a common saying as long as she can remember.

*high on the hog*

Rich living. "He eats high on the hog."

*high pocket*

An old worn-out prostitute.

*high stepper*

A proud acting, pretentious person, a show-off, a bold, fancy-dressed woman.

*highsterics*

Hysterics.

*hightantrabogus*

Noisy times, loud doings.

*high temper*

Excessive feelings, especially of anger.

There is an old saying that a Scotsman's high temper is the worst of all, for it is mixed in with stubbornness of will. This was well proved, at least for once, in the case of Julgar McWhorter and his wife Coziah McQueen McWhorter. Soon after they were married they got into a violent quarrel, and in the height of their Scotch tempers, they swore never to speak to each other again. And as far as anyone knows, they didn't. There they lived in their little house, each in a separate room. But there was certainly some visiting back and forth for they raised a family of six children. The oldest son Darrach once told me that his pa and ma used to communicate with each other through the children. "Tell your ma I see the chickens are eating up her collards out there in the garden," Julgar might say. And she would say, "Tell your pa I'll fix the other shirt tomorrow." At the same time she might be handing Julgar the one she'd just finished.

*high time*

Due, past time. "It's high time you was here."

*highly-tighty*

Proud, disdainful, uppish.

*high water mark*

A record performance or attainment, a high point of excellence.

*high, wide and handsome*

Prideful, braggish, and bold. "He cut a streak with the ladies high, wide and handsome, and that was his downfall."

*hikum-strikes*

Hysterics, a wild outburst of temper.

*hill*

One single yielding planted source. "Yessir, I got a peck of potatoes on the average from a single hill."

*hill (hill-up)*

To plough a crop such as cotton or tobacco for the last time, same as to lay by.

*hill of beans*

A term of comparison. "With his mammy spoiling him to death he won't amount to a hill of beans."

*hill potatoes*

To store potatoes.

We used to put down a good bedding of pine straw, then carefully pile the potatoes on the straw in a tapering heap. More straw was then put over these potatoes and covered with dirt, with an airhole at the top, much like an Indian's tepee. Then we would get busy and put a shelter over the hill. Usually we would have hard luck. Too often they would go through a sweat and would rot badly. In these later times, the farmers have learned how to cure their potatoes indoors, give them air, and so protect them from rotting.

*hills*

A woman's breasts. It is magically put in Shakespeare's song — "Hide, oh hide, those hills of snow."

*hilt*

Held. "The cold weather's hilt the cabbage plants back, and we ain't got none yet."

*hindforemost*

The hind part before.

*suck the hind tit*

To get the worst of a matter or to have the leavings, to be mistreated.

*hind wheels of nowhere*

Outlandish, crazy looking.

*to have on the hip*

To have the advantage of, to be in the driver's seat over another.

*hippen*

A baby's diaper.

*hippity hop*

Hopping along like a toad or rabbit.

*to walk with one's hips*

Said of a woman who moves her hips and buttocks sexily as she walks.

*hip-shotten*

Crippled, awkward.

*hisn*

His.

*his nibs*

A term of high praise, though sometimes satirical, a big shot, a proud boss. "There sat his nibs all swelled out in his white shirt front and that hussy threw a big glass of red wine all over him. Uhm, what a come-down."

*his tail draggin'*

Said of a coward, also of one discouraged.

*h'isted*

Hoisted.

*h'ist one*

To take a dram.

*History* repeats itself.

He who knows no *history* is doomed to repeat it.

*hit*

To succeed, to mature. "If my cotton hits this year, I'll make a bale to the acre."

*hit-and-run marriage*

A very brief marriage.

*hitch*

To tangle as in a fight.

To get married.

An unexpected difficulty, a confounding turn of events.

*hitch your wagon to a star*

Have high ambition, high ideals.

*hit if off*

To agree easily, work well together, to suit one another.

*hit it up*

To speed up.

*hit-off*

To imitate, to impersonate. "That fat baldheaded fellow could hit-off William Jennings Bryan to a tee."

*hits where you hold it*

Said of strong liquor.

*hit the deck*

To sleep, to fling oneself prone under an air attack.

*hit the grit*

To go, to move, to hurry. "Looks like a cloud coming up, we'd better hit the grit."

*hit the sawdust trail*

Process of repentance and confession of sins.

*hit where it hurts*

To touch on a sensitive subject.

*hit where one lives*

Has to do with one's main interest.

*play hob*

To mess things up, to hurt badly. "Liquor has just played hob with poor Rassie Taylor."

*hobbledehoy*

A stripling youth, an awkward fellow.

*hobby horse*

A chosen practice or favorite thing, a hug-to-the-bosom idea, thing or person. "Perpetual motion is his hobby horse, and he'll ride it till he goes crazy or something."

*hobnob*

To associate closely with, to be pals.

*hock*

The leg end of a ham, including the bones and the joint, often referred to as ham-hock.

*in hock*

On pawn, mortgaged, in debt.

*hockey*

Dung, human excrement, ordure, feces. "Take that boy out'n here — he's got hockey all over his foot."

"You want'er go *hockey*, son?"

"Yes, Pa."

"Come on then."

*hockset*

Hogshead.

*hocus-pocus*

Tricky dealings, witchery.

*Hoe* your own row.

*hoecake*

Bread made of cornmeal mixed with water and seasoned with salt and baked on a blade of an old-timey hoe.

*hoe hands*

Laborers hired to hoe and thin young cotton and chop grass from crops.

*hog*

A carpenter's or mason's term, meaning a hump or bulgy excrescence out of a straight line. "That wall's got a hog in it."

A *hog* runs for his life, a dog for his character.

If a *hog* carries a stick in its mouth, it is a sign of bad weather.

The greediest *hog* is the poorest.

Root *hog* or die.

It's whole *hog* or none.

*hog bladders*

'Way back it wasn't easy to get firrackers to make bedlam noise at Christmas. We often saved up dried hog bladders if hog-killing had come on before Christmas. We would blow these up and then burst them with a great pounce. The trouble was there weren't enough bladders to go around.



*hog killing*

That exciting time in winter — the cold weather being right — when the “fattening hogs,” which have been penned up and gorged with corn and kitchen slops for weeks, are killed for the year’s meat. My father, a typical Valley farmer, would be up in the freezing weather before daybreak and get a roaring fire going around the two big iron pots in the backyard to heat water for scalding the hogs and getting the hair off. A few neighbors would come in to help us as we helped them — something of a community enterprise, though of course much smaller than a cornshucking.

A large hole was dug in the ground to hold a sloping barrel with the open end up and the lip leaning out. When the water in the pots was near the boiling point ready for scalding the hogs (now that day had “done broke”), we would move to the pigpen. The fat waddling pigs would push their eager snouts between the rails of the fence grunting for their accustomed gift of food. But death as the final gift awaited them in the shape of the lifted axe whose butt would come down in a mighty thudding smack in their foreheads. And they died one by one with a protesting and supplicating squeal that perished gurgling in their mouths.

Quick as thinking almost, each one’s throat was cut by a sharp butcher knife to let the spoiling blood out. Then the bodies were hauled or dragged to the waiting barrel which had been filled with the boiling water. The bodies were lowered head first into the barrel and sloshed and turned about for a good scalding and then jerked out onto some spread-out planks or “outsides,” these latter being the sawed barked strippings from lumber logs. Flashing butcher knives, sharpened to razor-edge keenness, went swiftly to work scraping off the scalded and loosened hair — rumps, sides, legs, necks, heads, ears, noses — all.

Next, the now naked and white gleaming bodies were hung up along a stout scaffolding pole, with a gambrel stick inserted in their now bared heelstrings (tendons) to hold them up. Then came the gutting and pulling out the pile of entrails or guts as we always called them, followed by the haslet (liver, heart, lights), and the milt (spleen, pronounced “melt” by us). The empty belly caverns of the hogs were next washed out by deluges of cold water which passed bloodily and freely down and out through the slitted throats.

The guts were piled on a big outdoor table and the helping women (my mother was busy in the kitchen cooking the midday meal — always called “dinner” and never “lunch”) would get to work trimming the fat away from the guts and ridding them. This ridding was done by taking sections of the guts, washing them and inserting a long smooth withe or stick in them and packing them each on the stick in wrinkled layers. Then the sections would be pulled off in reverse, thus turning the guts inside out. These were

thoroughly washed and then some of them cut up in fine pieces which were later to be cooked as chitlins. These were supposed to be a real delicacy. Other guts were set aside to be stuffed later for sausage.

The bodies of the hogs were left hanging with the sides of their bellies propped open by gambrels so that they could cool faster. Later in the afternoon when death and the freezing weather had stiffened them sufficiently, they were laid on the big table and cut up, the heads cut off first, then the backbones taken out, and next the hams, shoulders and middlings separated. The hams were of first importance, then the shoulders and last the middlings — each as to the amount of lean meat in it.

It was the custom of courtesy to offer the neighbor helpers a haslet, or a backbone, or a head — each stating his own choosing. As I remember, our Negro helpers usually chose a backbone or a haslet and the white neighbors more often than not took nothing, saying they were “mighty glad to help you, Billy, just the way you help me.”

After supper my father with Roy McNeill, our one tenant — and sometimes my mother and some of us children too, if allowed from getting up our school lessons — would go out to the smokehouse — as we called the little one-room house across from the kitchen — and there trim the meat and salt it away. I can still see my father’s big toil-hardened hand almost lovingly rubbing the salt hard against a ham to make it sink in better.

Later on, the leaner pieces of trimmed-off meat were ground up in our little hand-turned sausage grinder and stuffed in guts chosen for that purpose. The stomach sacs when filled with ground sausage meat were called Tom Thumbs, why, I’ve never been able to find out.

The next day, with some of the women helpers back, the trimmed-off pieces of fat were boiled in the iron pot and turned (rendered) into lard. Next the tails, ears, noses, and feet of the pigs were cooked and souse meat made from them. The heads were hatchet-opened and the brains removed for cooking, usually with scrambled eggs — choice eating. The dried residue pieces remaining from the lard-rendering were ground up, seasoned with pepper, garden sage and salt and patted into large rounded balls of “cracklings.”

Now and then our hog-killing would be large enough for us to have some extra porkers for sale at the market in Raleigh, thirty miles away. This was a full day’s trip each way. One doleful time I’ll never forget. I was a little boy and at last had the happy privilege of going with my father. The almanac had prophesied cold weather, and it was cold the morning we “killed hogs.” Then it turned to summer’s heat as it often does in the South. We were delayed in getting off and, hurry the two mules as we could, we arrived at the old Raleigh Market House just as it was closing.

Too late!

During the night my father tried in vain to find some ice to put on the

five porkers in the wagon. The next day the inspector sniffed our pigs, shook his head and said they were beginning to spoil and he couldn't pass them. I can still see his swift energetic and somewhat hairy hand as it slapped the rubber stamp on a pig with the big screaming word "Condemned." And I can still see too the stricken look on my father's face, his begging mouth saying "no, no!"

Now the long desolate all-day road back home again. It was dark when we got there, but the children — Mary, Hugh, little arm-baby Gladys (Caro Mae and Erma hadn't been born) — were waiting by the road at the old branch a few hundred yards from the house with a lantern. They had been long waiting to welcome us home and to get at the precious gifts we had promised to bring them. Grief and weepings at the dreadful news! Mary put her hand on one of the pigs and said, "Poor pig, I'm sorry." But it was poor mother when we got to the house.

"Go get Rory," my father said to me and Hugh. We went across the field and got him. Out in the field we dug a big hole. I still remember how bright the moon shone. Our lantern light was hardly needed. The wagon was backed up to the hole, the pigs dragged out and dumped in and covered.

Later I put down on paper in a little short story the account of this occasion entitled "Burial by Moonlight." But there was no way I could tell in words the full grief we all felt nor make anyone hear the stifled sobbing of my mother.

Also refers to a hilarious party.

### *hog pen*

A messy room or place. "You ought to a-seen his house after they took his body out — a plumb hog pen it was."

### *hog's heaven*

A muck and a mire, any harum-scarum dishevelment, as a topsy-turvy bedroom.

### *hog wallow*

A mudhole in which hogs like to lie. Also a messy house.

### *hogwash*

Bad liquor, also worthless journalism and political barnstorming.

### *go the whole hog*

Complete a job, finish a promise, go all out for.

### *the old ho-hum*

A dull happening, the usual foretold result, especially used in regard to professional wrestling matches.

*hoigh*

High. A pronunciation now pretty much gone from the Valley.

*holdback straps*

Straps fastened to the shafts of a buggy and then snapped into the breeching of a harness which the horse or mule can press against to hold the buggy or carriage back in going down a hill.

*holding the bag*

Usually as "left holding the bag." To be bamboozled, fooled, made a scapegoat.

*holding up*

Same as holding on or holding his own.

*hold it*

Stop, wait.

*hold on*

To wait. "Hold on a minute before you go off half-cocked."

*hold one's own*

To stay about the same, in sickness making a good fight. "The way Lamar Lunsford holds his own is something to behold, him 80 years old."

*hold out*

To refuse to yield, also to continue to live when critically ill. "Poor Mis' Minty, she's still holding out."

*hold the fort (phone)*

Be patient, wait, take one's time before acting.

*hold tight*

Be careful, wary, wait.

*hold up*

To stop, to halt. Also to withstand age well. "I saw Frank Graham yesterday and in spite of his years, he's holding up well."

*hold water*

To stand up in a test, to be the truth. "That fellow's story won't hold water."

*hold with*

To approve, to agree. "Brother Green doesn't hold with that racial business."

*hold your horses*

Wait a bit, be patient, take it easy, much the same as hold the fort.

*hold your jaw*

Stop your comment, quit criticizing.

*hold your water*

Stay calm, don't get upset.

*burn a hole in one's pocket*

Said of money in possession of a spendthrift.

*hole in the head*

Foolish judgment, silly-headed.

*holier than thou*

A pious, hypocritical person.

*holler Lord and follow devil*

To preach one thing and do the opposite, hypocrisy.

*hollow*

The stomach, also a little valley between two hills.

When I was a little boy I heard the term used for the stomach in a way I've never forgot. It was court Monday in Lillington, our county seat, and I was there with my father. On our way to our buggy to return home we passed the courthouse. A crowd was gathered in front, ringing around the two white men. We stopped and I, being small, pushed through where I could see better. These men, one big and pot-bellied, the other lean and wiry, were facing each other with long-bladed pocket knives. The people, believe it or not, were egging them on with derisive and challenging calls. "Why don't you fellows fight?" "Who's scared of who?" "Aw, they're both scared, that's what," and so on.

I noted that the big man's face was almost cotton pale and the little fellow's a fiery red. Suddenly the little man flew at the big one, quick as a flash his knife going in swift slashings against the big man's belly. The big man threw up his hands with a moan, the knife dropped from his hands, and holding his arms across his belly he sank to the ground, the pouring blood beginning to stain his hands. "Lord God," he screamed, "he's killed me — he's done cut me to the hollow!"

My father grabbed me by the hand. "Come on, he said, "This ain't no place for us."

Later my father said Dr. Joe McKay told him the man died where he lay before he could get there to help him — "which I couldn't a-done anyhow," he said. As for the little man we heard he was put under a peace bond for a while, but never was tried — his act, the grand jury said, being in self-defense.

*hollow* as a drum

*hollow* as a gourd

*hollow* as a horn

*all hollow*

Thoroughly, completely. "In the election he got beat all hollow."

*hollow between the eyes*

Empty-headed, lacking in brains.

*hollow-hearted*

Insincere, deceitful.

*hollow horn*

A disease of cattle. In the Valley I've known sick cows to have the horn sawed off, the folk diagnosis of the cow doctor demanding it. Sometimes the horn stubs got infected and the poor animal died in great suffering.

*holly*

A popular evergreen tree. It never grows as large or tall as the big oaks and pines, but I have seen a few with bodies eighteen inches in diameter near the ground.

In winter when the holly berries are red it is much used for Christmas decoration. The leaves have little spiny points, and we young folks used to tell fortunes by these spines, especially as to sweethearts. We would start with spine one as *A* and go on down the alphabet to the end. The catch for me at first was that my girl's name was so far down the alphabet that the spines too often gave out before I got to the letter beginning either her given (Christian) or surname. But since from my earliest day I have had a devious nature, I got around it by choosing the letter from her name I wanted and so was comforted and with no conscience pang at all.

A decoction made from the berries was for a long, long time used in the Valley and elsewhere as a good medicine for coughs and colds. Also, the bark of this tree, when chewed, was good for the teeth.

One of the most beautiful of all nativity songs to me is "The Holly and the Ivy."

"The holly and the ivy,  
When they are both full grown,  
Of all the trees that are in the wood  
The holly bears the crown."

"The rising of the sun  
And the running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir."

Some scholars say that the subject matter of this carol is perhaps pagan and symbolizes the masculine (the holly) and the feminine (ivy) principle and perhaps was sung as a dance between "lads and maids." "The merry organ" occurs in Chaucer's "Nonnes Preestes Tale."

The holly bark was much used long ago as a source of bird lime, which was spread on limbs of trees to catch small birds in its viscous, sticky substance.

### *help*

Help. "Yesterday in Belk's store the Negro clerk said, 'Kin I help you.' "

### *holt*

Grip.

### *holts*

Time at bat in a country ball game. "It's our holts now, and you fellows get out on the field."

as *holy* as God

Remember the sabbath to keep it *holy*.

### *holy cats!*

An interjection.

### *Holy Communion*

A religious sacrament in which the bread and wine used actually become, for the fundamentalist believers, the body and blood of Jesus Christ himself. Thus in eating the bread and drinking the wine they are partaking of Christ's body and drinking his blood. All reason repudiates this, but then only in the repudiation can this sort of religion be most strongly affirmed, so it seems.

### *holy cow!*

An interjection.

### *holy dance*

Spasmodic jerks and jumps indulged in by religious fanatics when caught in the fervor of their religion, especially indulged in by the Pentecostal sects or Holy Rollers.

### *Holy Ghost*

The third Person of the Trinity, the others being God the Father and God the Son. The three are described in sacred writings as sitting in Heaven with the Son on the right hand of God and the Holy Ghost on the left, the right being a place of higher honor than the left.

The story of Jesus is like the story of all the founders of the world's different religions — miraculous. Belief in miracles is a part of religions

and has to be. Luke in 1:30-32 says that the angel said to the virgin, “Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb (en gastri) and bring forth a son and shall call his name Jesus (Salvation). He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.”

And Matthew adds his testimony saying, “Now the birth of Jesus was in this wise: When his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found of child of the Holy Ghost.”

In Mark, John the Baptist says that after him came one (Jesus) mightier than he “the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.” And in John, Jesus in his own words says of the Holy Ghost, “But the Comforter (Parakletos) which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

It is interesting that John uses the personal pronoun “he” (ekeinos, that one, that person) rather than an indefinite “it.”

But of course it is the nature of the miraculous to be too much for full statement in anything, language, signs, symbols or whatnot other than itself.

It is interesting, too, to note that in Buddhism the scriptures of that religion tell how the spirit (the ghost) that was to become the Buddha, the enlightened one, was at first a free spirit in heaven (small *h* here) and of his (its) own free will entered the womb of the beautiful Maya to be born into the world as the Way of Salvation for struggling man, he (it) the savior of the world.

And this Buddha, six hundred years before Christ, taught that man should live for his belief, not die — the opposite of what Jesus later taught. When I consider the thousands and thousands of people who have died and caused others to die for the Christian faith, the more I am inclined to favor Buddha.

### *holy jerks*

Same as the holy jumps and the holy dance.

### *holy mackerel!*

An interjection.

### *holy Moses!*

An interjection.

### *Holy Rollers*

A fervent religious sect, given to outlandish jerks, jumps, and foamy gibberish tongues when filled with the “spirit.”



*holy smoke!*

A mild expletive.

*holy terror*

A renegade, a rambunctious person.

*Holy Yowlers*

Shouting religionists, usually Holy Rollers.

East or west,

*Home* is best.

*Home* is where the heart is.

*Home* is where you hang your hat.

Four walls do not make a *home*.

There's no place like *home*.

Be it ever so humble, there's no place like *home*.

He lives at *home* and boards at the same place.

*nothing to write home about*

Of poor quality, nothing exceptional.

*home base*

One's domicile, also the goal.

*home free*

Reaching a goal without cost or penalty.

*Home-keeping* hearts are happiest.

*homeplace*

One's birthplace or where one grew up.

*homespun*

Plain, honest, sincere. "Abraham Lincoln was a homespun man, and one look at him and you could trust him."

*"Home, Sweet Home"*

The famous old-time song that everyone knows about but no one sings anymore. Lyrics by John Howard Payne and music by Henry R. Bishop. Its line, "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home," has become a folk proverb.

*hone*

To hunger for, yearn for, to love. "He kept honing after that girl till they had to shut him up in Dix Hill."

*honest* as the day is long

*honest injun!*

A mild oath, like “cross my heart and hope to die.” Usually a forefinger or several fingers are held up as “injun” sign.

*honest John*

Any honest person.

An *honest man* is the noblest work of God.

An *honest man's* word is as good as his bond.

*honest to God!*

An expletive.

*honest to goodness*

Beyond doubt, absolutely trustworthy, also used as an asseveration. “Honest to goodness, I didn’t mean to hurt you.” “He’s an honest to goodness man.”

*the honest truth*

An intensive expression. “To tell the honest truth, I don’t know what to do about the war in Vietnam.”

*Honesty* is the best policy.

*a honey*

A fine thing, a good job, first rate.

Make yourself all *honey* and the flies will devour you.

You may be *honey* but the bees don’t know it.

Give doses of *honey* mixed with ashes of burnt holly leaves for bad colds.

*honey bunch*

A term of endearment.

*honey dew*

An exudation often seen on bushes in May or June, especially in dry hot weather. It is a sticky sweet substance and shines in the light like a silvery glistening oil. It was supposed to be especially good when licked or eaten for girls’ health and beauty.

*honey-fuggle*

To cajole, to wheedle, to play with sexually.

*honey mouth*

Sweet talking, insincere flattery.

*honey pot*

A sexually sweet woman.

*honeysuckle*

A pestiferous vine with small white or yellow tubular-shaped blossoms. Their heavenly smell even surpasses that of the magnolia — to me it does. It seems to thrive under any and all conditions, and nothing it loves better than to wrap its twisting self around newly-planted loblolly pines. Its fruit is a little black berry about the size of a pea and in old days was supposed to be a good emetic as well as cathartic. Very clever of it to have it both ways — or ends.

*hongries (hungries)*

“Yessuh, Mr. Green,” said Purefoy as we were chopping in the garden one day, “they’s all kinds of hongries, like my pappy said, and some of ’em causes sin and some of ’em don’t.”

“I guess you’re right about that, Purefoy,” I said promptly.

“Well, suh, first comes the little hongry. Then after about two days the middle-sized hongry shows up, and you’re thinking ’bout stealing, but you ain’t done it yit. Yessuh, yo’ haid is busting slam fit to kill and they’s a right brief growling going on under yo’ bellyband.”

“You’ve never been that hongry, Purefoy.”

“Oh, yessuh, I been ’bout that hongry ’fore I come to work for you. And my pappy ’fore he died said he’d been hongrier than that. Yessuh, on the third or fo’th day, when you ain’t had nothing but branch water and some hickory buds you chewed on, that old big hongry has got you. Then what you reckon happens? Why, you go clipping round the white man’s kitchen with yo’ tongue hanging out. And too bad if they ain’t nobody home, for the next thing you knows yo’ hand done gone sliding under somebody’s window. And if the reach is too long, then you’ll be grabbing in the slop bucket. Yessuh, my daddy said they ain’t no man safe against sin long as them hongries is running loose in the world.”

“I believe he was right about that, Purefoy.”

“Yessuh, he was right. And he knowed a lot of things ’fore they put him in that ’lectric chair.”

*honk around*

To drive around on a lark.

*Honor thy father and thy mother.**hoodoo (voodoo)*

Any person or thing which can bring bad luck, an evil charm.

Going into the colored section of Chapel Hill one day to get our cook, I saw in the sandy path leading to the house some strange marks and crisscross

finger-draggings, as it were. I looked at them and when Mary came out on the porch, I pointed them out. She let out a little scream, and started to run back into the house and then stopped and held on to the door lintel.

"What in the world is the matter, Mary?" I asked.

"Lord, Mr. Green, somebody's been here in the night and tried to hoodoo me. Them marks is a hoodoo." And she shook with fright.

"Behave yourself, Mary, there's nothing to it. See, I'm going to wipe 'em out." So I squatted down on the ground and smoothed out the marks and stamped on them. "Now, all their power's gone," I said.

"Are you sure of that, Mr. Green?"

"Absolutely, Mary." And somewhat mollified she came down the porch to go get into the car, but I noticed that she stepped around the voodooed spot in the path.

*hooley*

Hot air, foolishness, political promises.

*hoey!*

A command or shout at a hog to leave, same as soeey.

*on the hoof*

Alive, unslaughtered. "I'll pay 10 cents a pound for them hogs on the hoof."

*hoof and mouth disease*

A phrase applicable to a boasting, loud-talking person.

The *hook* is hidden by the bait.

*one's own hook*

Accountability, responsibility. "He acted on his own hook."

*on the hook*

In a tough situation.

*hook or crook*

Devious means, in spite of difficulties. "By hook or crook he got there."

*hookers*

The horns of cattle.

*hookworm*

Any of certain parasitic nematode worms. See "ground itch." Pellagra and hookworm diseases years ago were for a long while Yankee-given attributes to the Old South, and then came Franklin D. Roosevelt's description, "economic problem number one." But that is all changed. The South is now perhaps the healthiest place in the country, and since the "sun belt" craze has struck, it is the fastest growing. But all has come a little late for, say, Melinda Chapin and her five illegitimate children.

This family lived in our neighborhood, and in addition to having the shame of bastardy on them, they were afflicted with hookworm. And they were filthy and stank more than a hot compost heap. You could smell them almost before you could see them. The welfare lady kept sending them to the hospital in Fayetteville where they'd be treated for a while, and then they'd come home no better than when they left. Finally "Doctor" Cicero East made up a tea from the wild ginger and wintergreen plants and fed it to them by the quart. They recovered from their hookworm, but he never did get them so they didn't stink.

### *hootchy-kootchy*

Sexy. "At the fair in Raleigh I seen them hootchy-kootchy girls in a sideshow — and uhm — uhm, their body works and dancing set me a-far, hear me, set me a-far."

### *Hoover cart*

A makeshift conveyance.

During the deep recession of the 1930's, many people, especially farmers, unable to pay for gas or the upkeep of their automobiles, took wheels from them and fitted them on carts or wagon axles, and pulled them by a horse or mule. Hence, the term and one of no honor to an honest and innocently involved president.

### *hop a ride*

To get a free ride, especially from a motorist. "Can I hop a ride with you up the road, mister?" "Sure, hop in."

*Hope* deferred makes the heart sick.

*Hope* for the best, but get ready for the worst.

*Hope* springs eternal in the human breast.

While there's life there's *hope*.

Live in *hope* if you die in despair.

### *hop over the broomstick*

To get married.

### *hoppergrass*

A grasshopper.

### *hopping-John*

A dish of black-eyed peas cooked with hog jowl for New Year's dinner.

### *hopple*

Hobble.

*Hopscotch*

Perhaps the most popular of all children's games especially with young girls. It needs no equipment other than a puck, or very small block or chip of wood and not much space, just five by some fifteen feet of level surface — ground or sidewalk. It is therefore suitable for both city and country life. As for players — any number can play, from one challenging himself to ten competing with one another. The playing area is marked off in squares, rectangles and triangles, numbered from one to ten. The puck is dropped in number one, and the player on one foot hops along and hop-punches the puck from successive place to place. If he hops into a line or the puck stops on a line or in the wrong space, the player is out or has to start over.

The above describes the way we children played it, but there are numerous variations.

*Hop, Skip and Jump*

An athletic game. Usually a base is marked and those in the contest will take a running start and spring with one foot on this base, land on the other foot, and then take a wide skip and final jump.

Also reference to a short distance. "It's only a hop, skip and a jump from Chapel Hill to Durham."

*hop to it*

A command to start working, to get a move on.

*horn*

The nose. "You ought to hear Ty Guthrie blow his horn."

The penis.

*horn book*

A school book protected by a horn covering especially for children in the early stages of learning; popular in colonial days when many children had to use the same primer.

*horn colic*

Sexual hunger on the part of a male.

*He toots his own horn.*

Self-praising.

*have the horn sawed off*

Tamed down, to be taken down a peg or two, discomfited.

*hornin' in*

Meddling, intruding.

*hornpipe*

A type of fiddling music.

Take the bull by the *horns*.

Let the *horns* go with the hide.

*horn snake*

A fabulous snake supposed to haunt the woods of the Valley. This snake has a horn in the end of its tail shaped like the end of a spear or like an arrowhead, and when he jabs this horn into a tree, the tree will die.

*hornswoggle*

To hoax.

*horny*

Sensual male.

*horny-handed*

Rough-handed, brutal.

*horny head*

A small chub-like fish.

*horoscope*

A modern popular folk superstition. The reading of one's fortune and foretelling the future by the relation of the planets and the signs of the zodiac. Many newspapers and all almanacs still carry these horoscopes. *The News and Observer* has a daily rendering.

*horrors!*

Exclamation.

*horrors*

Delirium tremens.

*horse*

To frolic about, to act loosely with the opposite sex, usually "horse around."

A cross-legged frame on which wood or timber is placed for cutting, same as the sawhorse. I remember reading a long time ago about how Abraham Lincoln and a neighbor tried to outdo each other in swapping horses. The neighbor had a sorry horse and, meeting Lincoln, said he would trade his horse sight unseen to any one that he had. Lincoln said, "You mean any kind of a horse?" The man said, "Sure." Lincoln said, "The trade is made." Then he took the neighbor around and handed him his sawhorse.

One white foot, buy him.

Two white feet, try him.

Three white feet, look well about him.  
Four white feet, do without him.  
(Wisdom rhyme.)

Don't beat a dead *horse*.

Don't spur a willing *horse*.

eats like a *horse*

A free *horse* rides easy.

A good *horse* never lacks a saddle.

'Tis a good *horse* that never stumbles.

A lean *horse* for a long race.

A short *horse* is soon curried.

He looks for the *horse* he rides on.

You can take (lead) a *horse* to water, but you can't make him drink.

*horse and buggy days*

Before the time of the automobile.

*horse apples*

A big, luscious apple, especially preferred in the making of cider.

*horse around*

To fool about among the women, to fly around.

*horseback opinion*

A hurried judgment or opinion, guesswork.

*horse block*

A block usually with a step cut in its side for mounting horses. You can still see these old horse blocks here and there in front of old-timey houses.

*horse colic*

Can be cured by burning some turpentine in the hollow of its hoof.

*horse collar*

The female pudenda.

To silence, to shame, to expose. "When he said that, I stood up and told him the truth and put the horse collar on him."

*horsefly weed*

The farmers used to fasten this weed in their horses' bridles to keep flies away. It was also a good medicinal plant. One ounce of boiled root to one



pint of hot water made a good tonic.

*gift horse*

A gift that is suspect, as in the old saying about “Never look a gift horse in the mouth.”

*horse-guard*

A flying, beetle-like insect about the size of a horsefly that attacks flies and other animal-pestering insects.

*horse hair*

There's a superstition that if a horse hair is put in running water it will turn to a snake.

*horse nettle*

See “apple of Sodom.”

*horse of another color*

A different matter, a contrary fact or proposition.

Don't swap (change) *horses* in the middle of the stream.

*hold your horses*

Be patient, wait a bit. Same as hold the phone.

*play horses and mares*

Sexual copulation.

*horse's ass*

A term of mild contempt.

*horseshoe*

The horseshoe is a well-known object in folklore. When I built my cabin down below my house years ago, I found a horseshoe and, of course, put it up in front of the door with the prongs up so that the good luck wouldn't leak out.

The female pudenda, same as horse collar.

*Horseshoes*

A game of skill. Two pegs are driven into the ground a chosen distance apart, say some twenty or twenty-five feet. The players usually are allowed two horseshoes each. They stand at one peg and cast the shoes singly at the other. The main purpose is to ring the horseshoe around the peg. If one player does that and a following player rings on top of him, the first player's ring is canceled. If the player's second cast rings on top of the two he gets a score — in our counting — of five. A leaner counts three and the shoe nearest the peg when there is neither a ringer nor a leaner counts for one and the right to shoot first, now back at the other peg.

*the horse's mouth*

Authority. "I got it straight from the horse's mouth."

*ride two horses at the same time*

A divided effort, a bad effort doomed to failure. "He tried to ride two horses at the same time, and no wonder he fell off both," that is, went bankrupt.

*horse-swapping*

A custom of long standing in the Valley. In nearly every county seat during court week the swappers would be busy. They usually showed up in town at that time with a dozen or so horses in tow and set up business in a back lot. And in the swapping it was understood by the buyer that he took all the risk. More often than not he regretted he did. The coming of the automobile ended this folk custom.

*horsey*

Sexually frolicsome, smart-alecky.

*horsing*

A mare in heat.

*George Moses Horton*

A Negro slave poet, one of the most remarkable men ever associated with the University of North Carolina. Dr. Kemp P. Battle in his "History of the University" gives this brief biography of Horton.

"He was a good servant, generally working on the farm of his master, James Horton, but, whenever he wished, allowed to hire his time at fifty cents a day. On such occasions he would visit Chapel Hill and write for the students acrostics on the names of their sweethearts. When his employer was willing to pay fifty cents, the poem was generously gushing. Twenty-five cents procured one more lukewarm in passion. He flourished from 1840 to 1860. About 1850 he published a book of poems in paper. After the Civil War he published another edition bound in boards. The book is rare. There is a copy in the Boston Public Library.

"Horton was of medium height, dark, but not black. His manner was courteous, his moral character good. Like Byron, Burns, and Poe he often quenched the divine spark with unpoetic whisky. He lived near Chapel Hill until the advent of the Federal Cavalry in 1865. He accompanied a Union General to Philadelphia after the Civil War. He left a son and a daughter, who no longer reside in this neighborhood. I give extracts from poems, one of nine verses on the *Pleasures of a Bachelor's Life*, and the other of six verses on the *Pains of a Bachelor's Life*.

O tell me not of Wedlock's charms,  
Nor busy Hymen's galling chain,

But rather let me fold my arms  
 From pleasures which will end in pain.

'Tis true the primogenial flower  
 Arose to pleasure in Eden's grove,  
 But did she not as soon devour  
 The silly bee that sought her love?

Then with content remain alone,  
 But still on wings of pleasure soar,  
 The storms of life will soon be gone,  
 Perhaps, and to return no more.

Without a surly wife to scold,  
 Or children to disturb your mind,  
 To pillage o'er your chest for gold,  
 And spend for trifles what they find.

*Pains of a Bachelor's Life*

When Adam dwelt in Eden's shade,  
 His state was joyless there;  
 He then the general scene surveyed,  
 No true delight the world displayed  
 To him without the fair.

His mind was like the ocean's wave  
 When rolling to and fro;  
 He seemed a creature doomed to crave,  
 Too melancholy to be brave,  
 When no true pleasures flow.

At length a smiling woman rose,  
 A bone from his own side,  
 The scene of pleasure to disclose  
 And lull him into soft repose,  
 The raptures of a bride.

Young bachelor who'er thou art,  
 Thy pleasures are but rare;  
 A thorn will never pierce thy heart  
 Until fond nature takes its part  
 Of comfort with the fair.

“Horton was entirely self-taught, picking up his A B C's from scraps of papers which accidentally came into his way. Then he gained possession of a spelling book. He conned over such of Wesley's Hymns as he had learned by heart, while listening to the singers. And so, entirely unaided by

instruction, he made the acquaintance of Grammar and Prosody and read many books, given or loaned to him by the students. One of his earliest poems began thus,

At length the silver queen begins to rise  
And spread her glowing mantle in the skies,  
And from the smiling chambers of the east,  
Invites the eye to her resplendent feast."

Encouraged by some Northern friends, Horton moved to Philadelphia in 1866. At that time it was a city of some half a million people with a colony of twenty thousand Negroes. Segregation was in force there, even as in the South. However, Horton was much praised and somewhat petted by the Northerners for awhile. Professor Collier Cobb, a professor at the University of North Carolina, says Richard Walser, visited Horton in 1883 and found him in good health and apparently satisfied with the honoring he was receiving. When Professor Cobb addressed him as "poet," he replied, "You are using the proper title." The date of his death is not known, nor where he is buried.

His poetry now is received as undistinguished verse, pretty much mere rhyming. But what an inspiring life!

*hoss*

Horse. To tease, to blackguard, to annoy. "Don't hoss me, big boy!"

*Hoss* and a flea and a couple-a mice  
Settin' in a corner shooting dice.  
Hoss crope up and fell on the flea.  
Flea cried out, "That's a hoss on me."

*hoss-cake*

A half affectionate, half derogatory form of address. "Look out, hoss-cake, you'll rupture yourself straining at that handspike."

*hossing 'round*

Same as to horse around, chasing loose women.

*hostess heat*

Housekeeping fervor and frenzy in preparation for the coming of company.

*hot*

Illegal, stolen. "That bicycle's hot — better leave it alone."

Sexually excited.

In good shape, first-rate condition. "That pitcher was hot and I struck out three times."

*not so hot*

Unacceptable, of poor workmanship. "His plans for that outdoor theatre are not so hot, if you ask me."

*hot* as a fire coal

*hot* as a hen in a wool blanket

*hot as a mink*

Sexually potent, usually with reference to a sexually excited female.

*hot* as an oven

*hot* as a pistol

*hot* as blue blazes

*hot* as fire

*hot* as fleury (fury)

*hot* as ginger (pepper)

*hot* as hell

*hot* as pepper

*hot* as red pepper

*hot* as the devil

*hot* as the hinges of hell

*both hot and cold*

Two-faced, unreliable.

*hot and heavy*

Energetically, excessively, with much force. "She went to scrubbing the floors hot and heavy."

*hot box*

High temper. "That Mamie'll get a hot box in a minute if you cross her."

A tight situation. Also an erotic woman.

*hot chair (seat)*

The electric chair.

*hot damn! hot dog! etc.*

Mild expletives.

*hot day in January*

An indefinite time, that is, never. "It'll be a hot day in January before I

kowtow to him.”

*hot foot*

Restless. Also, the sadistic game of striking a match and attaching it to the foot of a person who is unaware of the act until his flesh begins to burn.

*hot line*

A voluble and persuasive line of talk, convincing salesmanship.

*Hot love* is soon cold.

*hot off the fire (the griddle)*

New, brand-spanking new.

*to have a hot on*

To be sexually excited.

*hot pepper*

Speeded up rope jumping.

*the hot place*

Hell.

*hot spot*

A tough situation.

*hot stuff*

First rate, high class.

*hotter than a two-dollar pistol*

A measure of anger, also of dexterity. “That pool-player was hotter than a two-dollar pistol — nothing could stop him.”

*“A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight”*

A popular Tin-Pan Alley tune. This was another song we sang in the fields, usually the chorus only, this being the only part we knew by heart. Its four-four time went well with the rhythm of our chopping hoes. The lyric was written by Joe Hayden and music by Theo Metz and became a popular soldiers’ marching song in the Spanish-American War. It is — in what in old parlance was called — “a coon song.”

“When you hear dem bells  
go ding, ling, ling,  
All join round and sweetly you must sing.  
And when the verse am through,  
In the chorus all join in,  
There’ll be a hot time in the old town tonight.”

A man who mistreats his *hound* will beat his wife.

*hounds*

The diagonal bases in a wagon which are used to come together and brace the coupling pole.

He runs with the *hounds* and holds with the hares.

A deceiving opportunist.

*hour by the sun*

An hour after sunrise. "Me out here picking cotton since daybreak, and here you show up an hour by the sun."

An *hour* can destroy what an age has built.

*house*

To harvest. "By the middle of October he had housed all his crops."

*like a house a-fire*

In a hurry, tempestuous.

*out of house and home*

Financial failure, poverty. "The way things are going we'll be et out of house and home."

In my Father's *house* are many mansions.

It's a sorry *house* in which the woman wears the britches.

A man's *house* is his castle.

Do your *housekeeping* in the mouth of the bag, not at the bottom.

*house not made with hands*

A dream house, an imagined home.

There is scriptural reference to such a house in II Corinthians 5:1 which assures us that "we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

I had a friend, once, a wonderful woman who always hoped and planned to have a house of her own. She clerked in a dry goods store for many years, and all the while she collected house magazines and drawings of the home to be. Unfortunately in her young years she fell in love with a pretty worthless fellow and married him. He loved drink better than he loved her and for all her hard work — cooking and scrubbing and saving — she could never get enough ahead to put her dream into reality. But she loyally stuck by him.

Youth passed into middle age and still she held onto her dream. In the flu epidemic of 1918 she fell sick, and the doctor gave us no hope. Just as she was dying she called to us to let her have her house. There was one particular picture she had cherished — a little house with a pretty flowered walk leading up to it and windows, a chimney top and all. We put this in

her hand and she clutched it to her. She died with it there. And her sorry husband on his knees by the bed bellowed and bellowed and cried out, "She done left me all by myself — all by myself! What will I do? What? Help me, Lord! Help me, friends," and so on.

Later at the funeral service more than one of us wiped tears away and thought of her buried with the house picture held in her little, hard, toilworn hand, and we found the minister's words unfitting enough in their bitter irony — "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

Do not entirely finish a new *house* or bad luck will happen.

The Haywood house in Raleigh was a huge affair, and I was told that the reason it was so large was that the builder kept working at it as long as he lived, believing that it was never safe to finish it.

*house plunder*

Furniture.

*how about that!*

An exclamation of surprise mixed with a question.

*how come*

Why. "Ed had drunk so much rot-gut liquor his brains was addled; that's how come he shot hisself."

*Howdy*

A greeting, an abbreviation of how do you do.

*a howdy-do*

A sorry kettle of fish, a mixed up, topsy-turvy situation. "Now you've got yourself into a howdy-do—proposing to two girls and both of them accepting you."

*"How Firm a Foundation"*

This, another fine hymn of "blessed assurance" as to the way for man's salvation, has been a standby in Valley religious services for generations. The original words go back to the latter part of the 18th century and the melody is an old American folk hymn.

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said,  
To you who for refuge to Jesus hath fled?"

*How goes it?*

A form of greeting.



*howler*

A glaring blunder or faux pas.

*How Many Miles to Marley Bright (Molly Bright, Babylon)*

A chase game.

Two groups of children stand at their two separate bases. The witch "It" stands between. The leader of one group calls out to the other, "How far is it to Marley Bright?" The leader of that group answers "Three score miles and ten."

"Can I get there by candlelight?"

"Yes, if your legs are long and light  
And the old witch don't catch you."

Then the players who are going to Marley Bright make a dash toward the base of the first group. Those whom the witch touches have to join her. And the game goes on with the second group leader now asking the question, and trying to reach "Marley Bright" accordingly.

*How old are you?*

As old as my tongue,  
And a little older than my teeth.  
(A smarty phrase.)

*How're you doing?*

A colloquial greeting phrase meaning "how are you, how's your health," etc.

*howsomever*

Howsoever, in what manner, however it may be.

*hucker-mucker*

Hugger-mugger, secret, clandestine.

*huckleberry over my 'simmon*

An advantage over, one thing that tops another.

*huffish*

Petulant, easily irritated.

*huh!*

A response to a call, a disdainful comment.

*hulky*

Bulky, heavy.

*hullabaloo*

A loud racket, a ruckus.

*hullings*

Hulls.

*humble* as a dog

He that *humbleth* himself shall be exalted.

*humorsome*

Petulant, capricious, full of humors.

*hump*

To grow fast. "My tobacco's really humping after that good rain."

*Humpty Dumpty*

A proverb, also a riddle.

"Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall,  
Humpty Dumpty took a great fall,  
All the king's horses, all the king's men  
Can't put Humpty Dumpty back together again." (An egg.)

This is also a girls' game. The way it used to be played the girls would all sit in a circle, and each girl would gather her skirt tightly so as to enclose her feet — a feat no longer possible with the present mini-skirt. The leader then would begin the rhyme, and all would join in. At a word previously agreed on, keeping the skirts tightly grasped, they would throw themselves over backward. The object was to recover the former position without letting go of the skirt. I haven't heard of this game being played in many years.

*hunchback*

A giver of good luck as per an old custom.

Ed Kirkpatrick, the little hunchback, used to make a bit of money on Saturday afternoons in Dunn. He would stand in the back lot behind Hood and Grantham's drugstore and let the poor whites, Negroes and Croatan Indians rub his hump to bring them good luck. He charged a penny a rubbing.

I was an *hungered* and ye gave me no meat.

*hungry* enough to eat the lamb of God

as *hungry* as a bear (as *hungry* as a dog, as *hungry* as a hound, as *hungry* as a wolf, etc.)

Better to go *hungry* than be without reputation.

*hunky-dory*

Safe, snug, happy. "He and his little wife live in that house all hunky-dory."

*Hunky dory* bound to be  
 And never mind the weather  
 When your little shoes and my big boots  
 Sit under the bed together.  
 (A courting rhyme.)

You can't *hunt* two hares with one dog.

*hunter's moon*

The October moon.

*hurrah's nest*

A mess, a disordered topsy-turvy room.

*hurry-worry*

A bothersome doing, troubled hurrying.

They *hurt* themselves who hurt others.

*hurt*

Wounded, hurt, a child's pronunciation.

*hurting*

A pain. "He's got a hurting in his side, and it won't ease up."

He who *hurts* his own body works for the worms.

*hush-a-bye*

A divination rhyme.

*Hush-a-bye, baby,*  
 Daddy is near,  
 Mama is a lady,  
 And that's very clear.

Hush-a-bye, and don't you cry.  
 Go to sleep, little baby,  
 When you wake you'll have some cake  
 And all the pretty little horses.  
 (A nursery rhyme.)

*hushed as death*

A solemn stillness. "Everything was hushed as death in the house, and people talked in whispers."

*Hush little baby,* haven't you heard  
 Mama's gonna buy you a mockingbird.  
 If that mockingbird won't sing,  
 Mama's gonna buy you a diamond ring.

If that diamond ring turns brass,  
Mama's gonna buy you a looking glass.  
If that looking glass gets broke,  
Mama's gonna buy you a billy goat.  
If that billy goat runs away,  
Mama's gonna spank you every day.  
(A nursery rhyme.)

*hush puppy*

A small piece or dab of cornmeal batter fried in grease, especially a concomitant of Southern barbecue.

*hust*

Husk.

*hyena*

An obstreperous child. "That little fellow is a regular hyena."

*hy y'all*

A shortened greeting for "how are you all?"

# I

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*I* am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end.

*I* am the great *I* am.

*I* am the master of my fate,  
*I* am the captain of my soul.

*I* am the vine, ye are the branches.

Lo, *I* am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

*I* and the father are one.

Men may come, and men may go, but *I* go on forever.

*I asked my mother* for fifty cents  
To see the elephant jump the fence.  
He jumped so high he touched the sky,  
And he never come back till the Fourth of July.  
(A rope skipping rhyme.)

*I be dog!*

An exclamation.

*I be John Brown!*

An exclamation.

Don't skate on thin *ice*.

*ice*

A diamond or diamonds. "He had his moll with him, and she had ice all over her hands and around her neck."

*cuts no ice with me*

Makes no difference with me, doesn't impress.

*iced*

Safely won. "After that touchdown the Lions had the game iced."

*the idea!*

A mild expletive. Sometimes "the very idea!"

*What's the big idea?*

What foolishness is planned, with whose permission.

*I declare!*

An exclamation of surprise or amusement. Also "I declare to goodness!"

*idiot box*

Television set.

An *idle* brain is the devil's workshop.

A young man *idle* is an old man needy.

*Idleness* wears away the frog's ass.

*idlesome*

Idle.

*I don't mind if I do.*

An agreement, yes, an O.K. "Have some more ham, Mr. Wicker?"—  
"I don't mind if I do."

*If* it's (the weather's) hot enough to set your neighbor's beard afire, you'd better get water and wet yours.

*If* the sky falls, we shall all catch larks.

*If* today will not, tomorrow may.

*If* wishes were horses, beggars would ride.

*If you love me* like I love you,  
No knife can cut our love in two.  
(A friendship rhyme.)

*If* you swear while fishing, you'll catch none.

*If* you would have a hen lay, you must bear with cackling.

*If* you would know the value of a dollar, try to borrow one.

*ifs and ands*

Questions, conditions, alternatives, details, arguments. "There's no ifs and ands about the Negro people — they ought to have their rights as human beings, and they will if this nation is to stand."

No *ifs and ands*,  
No pots and pans.

*Ignorance* of the law excuses no one.

When *ignorance* is bliss 'tis folly to be wise.

*I had a little dog*, his name was Rover.  
When he died, he died all over.

*I had a little dog*, his name was Tough.  
I think my speech is long enough.

*Ikey*

A Jew. Much the same colloquialism as Abie.

*ikky*

Messy, distasteful, sticky.

*I know something* I won't tell,  
Three little niggers in a peanut shell,  
One was black, and one was blacker,  
One was the color of a chaw of tobaccor.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

*ill*

Bad-tempered, contrary, easy to anger. "He's one of the illest men I've ever met."

*ill as a hornet*

Ill-tempered.

*ill-convenient*

Awkward, not convenient.

*ill-got, ill-spent*

*I'll say!*

An assertion of agreement.

*ill-sick*

Sick.

*I'll tell the world!*

A firm pronouncement. "I'll tell the world — yeh, I'm mad."

*ill time*

An inconvenient time.

*illey-formed*

Deformed or crippled from birth. "Dr. Monroe's got that illy-formed boy

to provide for.”

### *immaculate conception*

The scientists say that the embryo beginning of all animal and human life is through a natural and sexual process of impregnation. Almost all religions support a different dogma as to the beginning of their saviors or divine leaders, especially, such as Buddha and Christ.

There was a time when a few people in the Valley believed for a while that they had an example of the immaculate conception among them. My good friend, Dr. John A. McKay—son of Dr. Joe McKay who delivered all of us Green babies — first gave me an account of this wonder and later we talked about it.

“It seems that about two o’clock p.m.,” he said, “a Confederate soldier in the battle of Aversboro was struck by a musket ball which carried away the lower half of one testicle. He lay around in the vicinity for a while for his wound to heal. When it was healed, the war was over and both he and Johnston had surrendered. He rather liked the community and decided to settle down there on a little farm.

“At exactly two p.m. or a couple of seconds or so after on that day of battle a young woman was sitting in a rocking chair on the porch of her father’s farmhouse a few hundred yards from the battle line. Her legs were spraddled out. A spent musket ball hit the floor of the porch and bounced up into her vagina. She screamed and jumped up and ran back into the house. The chunk of lead fell out of her onto the floor, and she picked it up and kept it.

“Nine months later she had a baby. She swore she had never had anything to do with a man, and because of her hitherto spotless character and reputation, it was agreed by a few of the more religious and believing ones that she had been touched by God or the Holy Ghost. The baby was a beautiful boy.

“Some years later she and the soldier met at a candy-pulling. They fell in love and he asked her to marry him. She was honest and mentioned that she had this bastard child, but he loved her so much he said to hell with that and married her.

“Sometime later after they had become ‘intimate,’ the soldier told her about his being wounded and the time it happened, and she told him what had happened to her almost at the same time as his wounding. They began studying the matter. She went and got the musket ball, and he recognized it as one of his own moulding. “Not only that,” according to Dr. McKay, but “they found a bit of skin and two or three hairs still sticking to it. A great light broke upon them. It was obvious that a piece of testicle with live sperm cells had ridden that warm ball for several hundred yards, landed in her vagina, lodged against the cervix (entrance to the uterus) and had



impregnated her. They embraced each other with great passion and with gales of laughter. They scrutinized the face of the little three-year-old boy. He was the 'spittin'-image' of his father."

In discussing this story with Dr. John, I said, "Such a thing couldn't have happened, could it, John?"

He smiled as he lighted another cigarette. "Some mighty queer things happen in the world, Paul," he said, "yes, they do."

### *immersion*

Baptism by dipping the candidate under the water until he is entirely covered. This is a symbolization that one's sins have been washed away and he is now ready to enter into the brotherhood of the church. Not all religious sects baptize by immersion. The Methodists, for instance, think that the sins can be washed away by a little bit of sprinkling. And so it goes with our beliefs and our contrary views.

### *immortality*

Survival after death, widely believed in throughout the world, especially in the so-called Christian world. I will never forget reading the dedication by Sean O'Casey in his play, "The Plough and the Stars."

"To the gay laugh of my mother at the  
gate of the grave."

### *impure blood*

Infection with syphilis usually. There have been many folk cures for impure blood, and the drugstores throughout the land are crowded with all sorts of fake remedies for this, ranging from sarsaparilla to Geritol.

### *in a hard row of stumps*

In a tough situation, in harsh difficulties.

### *in a hole*

In a tough situation.

### *in and out*

Unreliable, irresponsible, unsteady. "He's an in and outer, and I wouldn't hire him for such an important job."

### *in an interesting condition*

Pregnant. "I hear that Ted Evans' wife is in an interesting condition, and I'm glad, for they've been wanting a baby a long time."

### *in bad*

In a bad relationship with another. Also to be in bad as to a situation or reputation.

*in between*

Indecisive.

Can't see an *inch* before his nose.

He's every *inch* a man.

Give him an *inch* and he'll take an ell (mile).

*inch in*

To encroach gradually.

*in an inch of one's life*

A narrow escape or chance. I've heard many a mother and father say to a misbehaving child, "Shet up or I'll frale (sic) you in an inch of your life."

*inch worm*

A measuring worm. If an inch worm is found on a person's clothing, that means the worm is measuring the person either for his coffin or his shroud.

*Incline* thine ear unto wisdom.

*independent as a hog on ice*

Free-wheeling.

*Indian fields*

In the old days these were cleared corn fields which had been deserted by the Indians and allowed to grow up in briars and bushes. Much the same as old fields.

*Indian hen*

Pileated woodpecker, the good-god.

*Indian ladder*

A ladder made from the long body of a straight young tree by cutting notches in it for a foothold.

*Indian plantain*

Wild collards.

*Indian thistle*

The wild teasel. In the old days a tea made from it was a good diuretic.

*Indian turnip*

Jack-in-the-pulpit.

*indulge*

To drink strong liquor. "My father doesn't indulge."

*"I Need Thee Every Hour"*

An ever-consoling hymn to the Valley faithful.

"I need thee every hour,  
Most gracious Lord,  
No tender voice like thine  
Can peace afford.

I need thee, O, I need thee,  
Every hour I need thee!  
O bless me now, my Saviour,  
I come to thee."

*inevitable* as death

*in for a penny, in for a pound*

A partial involvement that means a total commitment.

*ingern*

Onion.

*in hock*

In pawn or mortgaged.

Man's *inhumanity* to man makes countless thousands mourn.

talking in the *ink bottle*

The plans are still unformulated, still to be drawn up.

*ink slinger*

A writer.

*innocent* as a child

*innocent* as a lamb

*in one's hair*

Bothering, annoying.

*in order*

In the right condition. "His land's in order now and he can start planting."

*ins and outs*

Various ways and means, the details. "Give me the ins and outs of the matter, and I'll tell you what I'll do."

*inside*

Within, soon. "He'll be here inside an hour, you watch."

*inside track*

To have the advantage of, to know ahead of time what is to happen, to have the underhold.

*in the altogether*

Naked, nude.

*in the bag*

Safe, completed, victorious. Same as sewed up. "By the beginning of the third quarter Carolina had it in the bag — yessir!"

*"In the Baggage Coach Ahead"*

A mournful and tear-jerking song, written by a talented Negro, one Gussie Davis, a former Pullman car porter. It was composed in 1896 and swept the country like another of his earlier throat-tighteners, "The Fatal Wedding" (q.v.). The "Baggage Coach" ballad tells the story of a young husband whose baby in his lap continues to cry and disturb the train passengers until some of them angrily tell him to take the baby to its mother. He mournfully tells them he wished he could but "she's dead in the baggage coach ahead." Then, of course, regrets and tearful sympathizing. The words were originally by one Frank Bracken of Hector, N.Y., and entitled "Mother." Davis saw possibilities in the poem and rewrote it. He then set the words to music, and it became the hit of the year.

Mother used to sing it to us children and we too shed tears as we joined in the chorus.

"While the train rolled onward,  
A husband sat in tears  
Thinking of the happiness  
Of just a few short years.  
For baby's face brings pictures of  
A cherished shape that's dead.  
But baby's cries can't waken her  
In the baggage coach ahead."

*in the black*

Financially stable.

*in the boat*

Flourishing, in fine condition.

*in the clear*

Innocent, with a sound alibi.

*In the deepest water* is the best fishing.

*"In the Evening by the Moonlight"*

Another favorite with our male quartet. How we loved it! It was perfect for close, swelling in-and-out barbershop harmony. James A. Bland, the Negro who wrote it (1854-1911), was one of the most gifted songwriters this country has produced. I rank him and Gussie Davis, another Negro genius, together.

Bland was hailed across the Atlantic as "the promise of Negro songwriters." He gave command performances for Queen Victoria and Edward, Prince of Wales. For twenty years or more he was the toast of the English music halls. Here in the United States he was long unknown even though his songs (among them also "Carry Me Back to Ol' Virginny," "Golden Slippers," and "Hand Me Down My Walking Cane") were widely sung. American publishers, as in the case of Stephen Foster, bought them for a pittance and, like Foster, Bland died destitute and penniless. He passed away in Philadelphia on May 5, 1911, and not a single newspaper mentioned his death. He was buried in an unmarked grave.

He wrote the words and music of some seven hundred songs. In 1939, through the efforts of ASCAP, his forgotten grave was located, the brambles, weeds and poison ivy cut away and a headstone erected. In 1940 the Virginia legislature made his "Carry Me Back to Ol' Virginny" the official state song.

"In the evening by the moonlight  
 You could hear the young folks singing.  
 In the evening by the moonlight  
 You could hear the banjos ringing.  
 How the old folks would enjoy it.  
 They would sit all night and listen  
 As we sang in the evening by the moonlight."

*in the fold*

Safely converted religiously, saved from nature to grace.

*in the know*

To have inside and confidential knowledge. •

*in the morning*

Tomorrow morning. "I'll see you in the morning bright and early."

*in the red*

To show a financial loss.

*in the soup*

In a dilemma, in a difficult situation.

*In time* of prosperity, friends will be plenty;  
In time of adversity, not one amongst twenty.

*intment*

Ointment.

*in two*

Broken, separated. "The electric line under the ground come in two, and we had a hard time finding it."

*Ipecac*

Powerful emetic.

*Irish*

High spirits, high temper. "That gal's got a lot of Irish in her."

as *Irish* as Paddy's pig

*Irish potato*

The common potato as contrasted with the sweet potato. It is often called spud. The Irish potato grows throughout the United States and the juice of its leaves is reported to be an excellent diuretic. A slice of an Irish potato carried in the pocket is supposed to be good protection against arthritis.

*to get one's Irish up*

To rouse one's temper or high spirits.

*iron*

Grit, courage, stamina.

*Iron* sharpeneth *iron*.

He's got a lot of *iron* in his character.

Strike while the *iron* is hot.

*the iron-faced man*

A Valley ha'nt.

*too many irons in the fire*

Too much work on hand, too many things for concentration.

*"I Saw Esau"*

" 'Twas just about a year ago  
When I was down to Glo'ster  
I found a lass, but now, alas  
I find that I have lost her.  
I'm sure I never can forget  
The happy days that we saw

Before the day on which we met  
 Her Country Cousin Esau.  
 I saw Esau kissing Kate  
 and the fact is we all three saw  
 For I saw Esau, he saw me  
 and she saw I saw Esau."  
 (A tongue twister.)

We young folks used to have a lot of fun singing the syllables of this comic song against one another.

### *I Spy with My Little Eye*

A children's game. Usually one in the lead, "It,"—and we used to play it and still do with the children around the table — will say "I spy with my little eye something beginning with the letter A," etc. Sometimes the area of spying is limited to the table itself. It is surprising how many objects on the table one can find to begin with the letter of his choice. The one who guesses correctly becomes "It" and has the next challenging statement.

### *isshy*

Sticky, messy, much the same as ikky.

### *issy (issue)*

A child of a white mother and a Negro father. "You know—that poor woman give birth to one of these issy babies."

### *it*

Sex appeal. "Yessir, that gal's got *it*."

*It* ain't gonna rain no more, no more.  
*It* ain't gonna rain no more.  
 How in the hell can old folks tell  
 When it ain't gonna rain no more?  
 (Weather jingle.)

*It* all comes out in the wash.

*It* is a foolish sheep that makes the wolf his confessor.

*It* is a long lane that has no turning.

*It* is an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

*It* is a sad house where the hen crows louder than the cock.

*It* is a silly goose that comes to a fox's sermon.

*It* is a wise child that knows its own father.

*It* is better to be beloved than honoured.

*It* is better to do well than to say well.  
*It* is easier to descend than to ascend.  
*It* is easier to pull down than to build up.  
*It* is hard to teach an old dog new tricks.  
*It* never rains but it pours.  
*It's* no use crying over spilt milk.  
*It* takes two to make a quarrel.  
*It* will be all the same a hundred years hence.

*itch*

There are all sorts of folk cures for the itch. Now I remember we boys used to have a vulgar rhyme which we would recite with great glee—

Old John Jones is a son of a bitch,  
 His cod rotted out with the seven-year *itch*.

And most often, of course, we would use the name of some neighbor and, behind his back and with him never knowing it, have great gales of laughter at his expense, as we imagined in our minds his terrible condition. One of the best Valley cures was the use of sulphur—burn it in one's room, and also rub it on your body. My brother John and I once caught the itch, and so we used the sulphur cure, and we nearly stifled ourselves in our little shed room and created a stink all over the place. We got well, of course. Whether the sulphur helped cure us, I don't know. Another cure was poke root, and I well remember a neighbor who tried it. It was such a funny happening that I put it down as a sort of story. See "pokeberry weed."

My nose *itches* (eetches)  
 Cream and peaches  
 Someone is coming  
 With a hole in his breeches.  
 (A fortune telling rhyme.)

*itching foot*

This means that one is anxious to travel and will travel into strange lands.

*itching palm*

Greed for money.

*itchy nose*

This means that someone is talking about you.



*by itself (all by itself)*

Alone, singly, in its own strength. "There that little thing stood in the cold night all by itself."

*ivories*

Chips in a poker game. Also the piano keys, or the teeth.

*tickle the ivories*

To play the piano adeptly.

*"I Was Born About Ten Thousand Years Ago"*

"I was born about ten thousand years ago,  
And there's nothing in the world that I don't know.  
I was round the corner peeping at the apple Eve was eating,  
And I was the man that et the core.

I was there when old Noey built his ark,  
And I got on board it after dark,  
I twisted the lion's tail and made Jonah swallow the whale,  
And I swum across the Atlantic on a log."

(A braggart song.)

At Buie's Creek Academy, when I was a student, we added several local verses to this. One I remember had to do with Professor James A. Campbell, the head of the school, and teacher John R. Baggett, who had recovered from a bad illness. It is interesting to note that Mr. Campbell, one of the best teachers I ever had, graduated from Wake Forest College at the same time his two sons Leslie and Carlyle did. As for Mr. Baggett, I always understood that he, like Andrew Johnson, couldn't read or write till he was a grown man. But he learned and later went to the university, washed dishes and did odd jobs for his keep, studied law and became a successful attorney in my old hometown of Lillington. He sent his two sons to the same university. They were provided with a new Buick roadster for their convenience as fraternity men. Neither finished school.

Our song went on verse after verse—

"I was the man that painted Campbell's head so red,  
And I raised Professor Baggett from the dead,"—

The rest I have long forgot.

*I went to the river* and couldn't get across,  
Jumped on a nigger and thought he was a hoss,  
The nigger bucked and threwed me in—  
Said to myself, "It's sink or swim."

(Recitation rhyme.)

*I Went to Visit a Friend*

A children's (girls') singing and imitative game.

I went to visit a friend one day.  
She only lived across the way,  
She said she couldn't go out to play,  
For Monday was her washing day.

(Pantomiming)

This is the way she washed away (three times)  
For Monday was her washing day.

And next comes Tuesday which was her ironing day and so on with Wednesday as mending day, Thursday, sewing day, Friday, baking day, and Saturday, sweeping day. Sunday was always left out, but it could have been worship or church day, with the children kneeling, their eyes closed, and their hands piously crossed. But that would have been thought a mocking of sacred matters by the elders.

*izzard*

The last bit, the end, the letter Z. The old expression "from A to izzard," of course, meant from first to last.

*Izzy Izzard*

See "crows."

# J

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## *jabbo*

A word for the weakening of a person at work, often referred to as "the monkey." In the old days when we were cutting timber in the swamps or woods, or pulling fodder, and the weather was hot, sometimes a worker would call out "Old jabbo's walking around!"—which meant that some of the workers were beginning to feel fatigue and were about to "give out." One of the proudest boasts a woodsman, or fodder puller, or plowman could declare was that old jabbo could never get him down.

## *jabbob*

A creeper, a cuckold, someone who steals one's wife or girlfriend. A prisoner in the Raleigh penitentiary told me once that jabbobs really go to work when a husband or sweetheart is in prison. "The unlucky fellows come out most often to find that some jabbob has got his girl or wife. And then out with the gun, a killing maybe, and back in the pen again or the chair."

## *jabbob papers*

Papers received by a husband or a wife serving notice for a divorce.

## *jack*

The male of certain animals, as jackass.

Money.

For every *Jack*  
 There is a Jill  
 That does with Jack  
 Whate'er she will.  
 (A proverb.)

*Jack* and Jill went up the hill  
 To fetch a pail of water.

Jack fell down and broke his crown  
And Jill came tumbling after.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

*Jack and Jim*

A sleight of hand game or trick.

I remember how astounded we children were the first time our mother worked this on us. Of course there is no second time with those who have seen how it is done. The fun then is to work it on newcomers.

You take a bit of paper, wet one side with your tongue and stick it on the nail, say, of each forefinger. Place these fingers on the table, the other fingers curled back in the palms of the hand. Then recite the following:

“Two blackbirds sat on a limb,  
The one named Jack, the other named Jim.  
Fly away, Jack, fly away, Jim.”

At the command “Fly away, Jack,” my mother’s hand would go up in the air behind her and come down on the table with the fingernail bare. A different finger, the second one, say, came back, but we children wouldn’t notice the difference. The same command and action followed with “Jim.” Then she would call, “Come back, Jack,” and her hand would go up and back, and come down on the table with the right finger and bit of paper still on it. The same followed with “Jim.”

Gasps of wonder followed. Then when we saw how it worked, we’d be busy for the next hour trying out our performance till finally in loving exasperation she would have to run us off to bed.

*Jack*, be nimble,  
Jack, be quick,  
Jack, jump over the candlestick.  
(A nursery rhyme.)

*jacket*

A vest.

*Jack in the Bush*

A guessing game for two players. The first will extend his closed hand, holding tiny objects. (My brother Hugh and I used grains of corn; some of our neighbors used chinquapins.) The second player is to guess at the number as per the following dialogue:

“Jack in the bush.”  
“Cut him down.”  
“How many licks?”

The second player then guesses at the number. The hand is opened revealing

the objects—sometimes none at all. If he guesses correctly, he wins all that the hand holds. If he misses, he must pay the first player from his holdings the difference between his guess and the actual number.

The game continues till one has cleaned the other out. Of course the supply of grains of corn or chinquapins or whatever is not inexhaustible. At the start, the players agree on the number they have to play with, say twenty-five or fifty.

*Jack, Jack, where's my \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_?*

A divination rhyme to find a lost object. Spit in your hand, hit the hand with your fore and second fingers, and whichever way the biggest glob of spittle goes will lead to the lost object.

*jack-knifing*

Horse-bucking.

*Jack-muh-lantern*

A strange and eerie creature same as Jack-o-lantern. It is said he lives in the swamps of North Carolina. Sometimes he is referred to as a light, and then as an actual being, and seen most often rising from a grave or near a grave.

*jack-of-all-trades and master of none*

A ne'er-do-well, a fellow who has a knack for 'most anything and will stick to nothing.

*jack off*

A male sexual orgasm.

*jack plane*

A large plane for coarse carpenter work.

*before one can say Jack Robinson*

Quickly, almost instantly.

*Jack Rocks*

A game of manual skill.

Take five small pebbles, or small iron jacks in the form of double tripods (which can be purchased at any ten-cent store). The player throws them all up at once and catches them on the back of his hand. If he fails to catch them all, then he hands the jacks over to the next player. But if he catches them all, he then attempts a series of intricate figures. In these figures the jacks are rolled out on the floor. Then one of the jacks is chosen and thrown up, and while it is in the air, the player picks up the others one at a time. As long as he is successful, he continues to pick them up two at a time, three, four, etc. Should he fail in any of these movements, another player takes

his place and begins again. There are numerous other figures, more or less intricate, that belong to this game, like: "feeding the chickens," "riding the elephants," "putting the bull in the pen," etc. And each of these is performed while one jack is in the air or resting on the back of the hand. This game used to be most popular in the Valley. My brother Hugh was very good at it and so were all my sisters with their nimble fingers. I was a poor player and usually watched others play.

*Jack Spratt* could eat no fat,  
His wife could eat no lean,  
So you see between them both  
They kept the platter clean.  
(A folk rhyme.)

*jack up*

To reprimand, to scold, to encourage. Also to put a jack under an axle and lever a wheel up for taking a tire off or mending it.

A good *Jack* will make a good Jill.

*Jacob's ladder*

A constellation in the sky, also a configuration game played with string. Also, of course, the vision Jacob saw in his dream (Gen. 28:12).

*Jacob's oil*

A patent medicine, once a very popular "cure" for rheumatism, swellings or any kind of pains.

*jady*

Jaded, tired. "Atlee said that after she served the wedding reception Saturday evening she felt so jady."

*jag*

A piece, a corner, a triangle. "Up here on the map is a jag of land that I would like to buy."

A spree, a wild party, a drunken debauch, also a crying jag.

*jaggy*

Jagged.

*jags*

Tatters, rags.

*jail fever*

A melancholia, a depression that prison inmates often suffer.

*jake*

Satisfactory, safe, all o.k. "Yessir, you come along, everything's jake down

there at that gal's house."

*jakes*

The privy, or commode in a bathroom.

*jam*

A crowd, a conclave. "There was a jam of people at Marian Graham's funeral."

Close to, adjoin. "He was jam on me before I saw him."

*jam up*

Crowded, standing room only.

First rate, above reproach. "The Maurice girls were jam up young ladies."

*janders*

Jaundice. "Uncle Pete is mighty poor with the yellow janders."

*Jane*

A girl.

*jangly*

Jangling.

*jarhead*

A stubborn mule or horse.

To the *jaundiced* all things seem yellow.

*jaw*

Sassy speech.

To argue, to talk excessively.

*jawbone*

Credible talk, persuasive argument. "That fellow lived on his jawbone."

*jawbreaker (jaw cracker)*

Words difficult to pronounce, big phrases, outlandish concourse of wordage.

*jay*

A gay foppish fellow.

*jaybird*

The blue jay. There is an almost universal superstition that the jaybird goes to hell every Friday to carry the devil some straw for his fire or a grain of corn for food. When the jay gets back, he is usually noisy and quarrelsome, and his eyes, if you look at him closely, will show they are red, very red, from the heat of hell.

*Jaybird* sittin' on a hickory limb  
Winked at me and I winked at him.  
Took my bow and split his shin,  
Left the arrow stickin' in.  
(A jingle.)

*jazz*

Nonsense, idle chatter. "Oh, they gave me a lot of praise and promise and all that jazz."

*jazz up*

To enliven.

*jealous* as a hen with one chicken

*"Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair"*

Stephen Foster's immortal love song created for and about his sweetheart Jane McDowell who later became his wife.

*jeans*

Trousers. In one of the Eastern Carolina courts one day the judge fined a Negro \$10 for some misdemeanor. The Negro defendant spoke up quite pertly and said, "Yessir, your honor, I got it right here in my jeans." This outspokenness irritated the judge, and he came quickly back, saying, "And six months on the road. Have you got that in your jeans?"

*jedge*

Judge.

*Jeems*

James.

*Jehovah*

The Hebrew Yahweh and often called upon as is the Christian God. Much the same as Zeus or any religious ruler of the universe. As I have mentioned before, the Jehovah of the Old Testament seems to be pretty much a thundering and bloodthirsty character. And, certainly, the God of the New Testament represents an ameliorative development in the folklore of man's religious urgings.

*jell*

To fit, come to fruition, move in harmony. "Our trade finally jelled, and I'm buying his horse."

*jellybag*

The scrotum.



*jellyroll*

A bankroll, money. Also a woman's seductive stomach dance.

*Jemima*

An elderly housekeeper.

*Jenny Jones*

A dramatic game. A group of children form into a line, holding hands, and two of them act the parts of Miss Jenny Jones and her mother. The mother usually stands or sits on the ground, and Miss Jenny Ann Jones hides behind her. Then the line of children advances, singing:

"I'm going to see Miss Jenny Ann Jones (three times)  
And how is she today?"

The mother replies:

"She's upstairs washing, washing, washing.  
She's upstairs washing.  
You can't see her today."

Then the children sing back that they're very glad to hear it, and how is she today, etc. Then they go through all sorts of imitative actions about ironing, cooking, scrubbing, etc. When the mother answers that she is sick, better, or worse, or dead, then the dancers go back to their starting place and come again toward her, singing, "What color is she to be buried in," etc. And they say that blue is for sailors, and red is for the army, and green is for the jealous, and black is for the mourner, and white is for the angels. Then they go on to ask, "Where shall we bury her?" and they bury her under an apple tree. Then they say, they think they saw a ghost last night, etc. And at that, when they talk about ghosts, the mother rises up and tears after them. The one who is caught is the Miss Jenny Ann Jones for the next game, and the next one caught after her becomes the mother.

*jenny wren*

The common Carolina wren. Also a demure housewife.

*Go to Jericho!*

A mild expletive command.

*jeremiah*

A sermon, a scolding, a pious berating.

*jerk*

A very short time, almost instantly. "In two jerks of a sheep's tail I'll be gone."

*jerk a knot*

To cut off, to make one behave correctly.

*jerk off*

To execute a thing quickly, to have a sexual orgasm from masturbation.

*Jerry Hall* he was so small,  
A rat could eat him, hat and all.  
(A teasing rhyme.)

*Jerusalem!*

An interjection, usually drawled out — Jee-ru-sa-lem!

*Jerusalem oak (worm weed)*

Sometimes called Mexican tea, wormseed or worm weed, also stinking weed. It is common throughout the South, July to October, and grows prolifically in waste places and along roadsides, sometimes reaching a height of six feet or more. It is aromatic, and the crushed stem gives forth a sticky substance.

I don't like this plant, for as a boy I had to grub up too much of it as it tried to spread into the fields. In the old days women used tea from its seeds to help in menstruation too. Some of the old folklorists warned against it because, as they said, it had a "bad poison effect on the brain." The tea was also used to clean out the children's bowels. In the Valley we used to burn the plant for potash to rub on our fresh hog meat.

*give one Jesse*

To give one a bawling out, a scolding.

*Jesus*

In the Christian faith, he is the son of God and the savior of the world. The name is not quite so holy as "Christ," but it is a sin to take it in vain. There used to be a Negro in Chapel Hill who would never step on a piece of paper. If he saw a bit lying on the street, he would always stoop and pick it up. When he was asked why he behaved like this, with his hat in his hand he said, "I dassent step on it 'caze it might have the name of Jesus on it."

*"Jesus, Lover of My Soul"*

A soft-assertion hymn and of lasting comfort to many a Valley soul as elsewhere in the world. The words are by Charles Wesley, 1740, and the music by Simeon Marsh, 1834.

"Hide me, O my Saviour, hide  
Till the storm of life be past,  
Safe into thy haven guide—  
O receive my soul at last!"

And so on in abiding reassurance.

*jest*

Just.

*jet*

To blow snot from one's nose by putting a finger against a nostril and giving a blast with the other.

*jew* or *jew down*

To cheat, to persuade a lowering of prices. "I kept jewing him down until I got the dog for two dollars."

Dew.

*jewberry*

Dewberry.

A *jewel* of a woman is better than a woman of jewels.

*Jewish disease*

Over-sensibility, especially to adverse criticism, over-indulgence in self-brooding, self-pity. I knew a fine Jewish girl who often told me she had that disease.

*jew price*

A reduced price from a usually over-high price to start with and never on the even dollar, most often like \$4.99 or \$4.98.

*jew's harp*

A little instrument with a vibrating tongue in it which is played by placing it against the lips and vibrating with one's own tongue. It makes a low drumming sound and is about as boring as a dulcimer.

*wandering Jew (dew)*

A well-known Valley plant, common elsewhere also.

*jibber-jabber*

Foolish talk, word spouting.

*jibe*

Fit. "This window don't jibe."

*jiffy*

Soon, quick. "I'll be there in a jiffy."

*jigger*

An insect, same as chigger.

*I be jiggered!*

An exclamation.

*Jiggety bum*, cider come,  
Massah, give poor nigger some.  
Two potatoes and a dram  
Make a nigger a gentleman.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

*Jiggety bum*, jiggety bum.  
Come butter, come,  
For I want some.  
(A divination rhyme.)

*jiggle-jaggle*  
Topsy-turvy.

the *jig is up*  
The guilt is found out, one is discovered in his wrong-doing.

*jill*  
An easy, loose-going girl.

*jimber-jawed (jimmy-jawed)*  
Same as wamper-jawed, jaws slightly unmatched. Also hard-jawed.

*Jim Crow*  
An old Negro dance, a minstrel dance act.

*jim dandy*  
First rate, fine.

*jiminy cricket!*  
A mild exclamation!

*jimjams*  
The delirium tremens.

*jimmy john*  
A demijohn.

*Jimson weed*  
A heavy-leaved erect poisonous weed with pale-violet trumpet-shaped flowers sometimes referred to as "Angel's Trumpet." It has spiny seed pods, and these seeds when eaten can cause death, it is said. It springs up quickly in neglected vegetable gardens and in waste places.

We children used to have great fun in the dusk of warm summer evenings chasing after the great tobacco moths that haunted the strong-scented blooms. A tea made from its leaves was supposed to be good to help a mother to a quick recovery from the pains of childbirth. Also it was recommended in the treatment of syphilis. Sometimes the warmed leaves bound against

the head were good for headache. A pound of beaten fresh green leaves mixed with three pounds of lard also made good grease-rubbing for women's inflamed breasts. I read in an old book once where it said that harem wives in Turkey were wont to chew this weed and swallow the juice to strengthen their powers of love. I wonder what the head of the harem, the old Turk himself, chewed.

Dr. Leonard Fields, our family physician for forty years or more, told me of its powers in the treatment of asthma. He had a Negro boy for a patient and was treating him regularly with atropine. Days passed and his patient didn't show up for his regular dose. One day Dr. Fields met him on the street in Chapel Hill and asked him how he was getting along. "Sho' fine," said the boy. Then he pulled out a large half-smoked cigarette. He told the doctor that his grandmother had put him to smoking dried Jimson weed leaves and she was curing him up. The old woman was right in her treatment, said the doctor. "The weed has the same drug in it with which I had been treating this patient."

*jimswinger*

The penis.

The long-tailed coat that politicians used to wear to impress others.

*I be jimswingled!*

An interjection.

*jine*

Join.

*"Jingle Bells"*

The ever-popular, high-spirited and carefree winter song.

"Jingle bells, jingle bells,  
Jingle all the way.  
Oh, what fun it is to ride  
In a one-horse open sleigh!"

*by jingo!*

A mild interjection.

*by jings!*

A mild expletive.

*Jiniwary*

January.

*j'int*

Joint.

*j'int snake*

A fabled Valley snake which when chopped in two can immediately join (jine) together again.

*jip-jawed*

Same as wamper-jawed.

*jit*

A nickel.

*jitterbug juice*

Liquor.

*Jo*

A sweetheart.

*job*

Jab.

*do a job*

To defecate.

*Job's coffin*

A constellation in the sky, the Dolphin, the four stars east of the seven stars.

*Job's comforter*

A boil. Also a doleful adviser, a phony comforter, one who adds to distress while pretending to ease it.

*Job's tears*

The false gromwell of the forget-me-not family. It grows to a height of three or four feet and is common in the seaboard states from New England to Florida. Its pearly-white capsule-like seeds hanging down suggest tears maybe. But how Job got connected with it I don't know. The seeds and the root were used as a diuretic in the old days. The best thing about it for me is its poetic name.

poor as *Job's turkey*

*Job's wife*

A shrewish woman.

*Joe*

A conjure ball used by males to win women's affections.

Coffee. "Bring me a cup of hot Joe, will you?"

*Joe* Monroe, cut off his toe  
And hung it up to dry.

All the girls began to laugh  
 And Joe began to cry.  
 (A recitation rhyme.)

*joe-trots*  
 Diarrhea.

*joggly*  
 Unsteady, shaky.

*jog-still*  
 Very still.

*john*  
 Privy, a commode, a toilet. "I opened the door and there she was sitting on the john."

*John Hancock*  
 One's signature, handwriting. Also the penis.

*John Henry*  
 One's signature, same as John Hancock. "Just put your John Henry here."  
 A legendary Negro strong man, comparable to the mighty Paul Bunyan of the northwestern woods, who matched his hammer against a steel drill in driving railroad spikes into cross-ties to hold the steel rails in place. He won over the machine but died from his exertion "with his hammer in his hand." Dr. Guy Johnson of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has a full and fine book on the legend and the music that goes with it. Carl Sandburg also makes quite a bit of the John Henry song in "The American Songbag."

Many a Negro strong man has in braggadocio taken over the name of the folk hero. I used one of these in a Negro drama entitled "Roll Sweet Chariot."

"John Henry was a little boy,  
 Sitting on his father's knee.  
 He gave one long and lonesome cry,  
 Said 'The hammer'll be the death of me,  
 Hammer be the death of me.'

"John Henry said to the captain,  
 'I'm nothing but a natural man,  
 But before I let that steel drill beat me down  
 I'll die with my hammer in my hand,  
 Die with my hammer in my hand.'

“John Henry hammered in the mountain,  
Hammered till his hammer caught on fire,  
John Henry said to the captain,  
‘Cool drink of water ’fore I die,  
Cool drink of water, please, ’fore I die.’

“John Henry had a little woman,  
The dress she wore was red,  
The very last words I heard her say  
Was ‘I’m going where my man fell dead,  
Going where my man fell dead.’ ”

*honest John*

An honest, upright person, a term sometimes used in derogation. “Did you see old honest John playing croquet Sunday, how, every once in a while when nobody was looking he would move the ball a bit toward the wicket?”

*johnny cake*

A cake made with cornmeal mixed with water or milk, seasoned with salt and, in the old days, baked on a board set close before the fire.

*Johnny-come-lately*

A late arrival, one who barges in and tries to participate in the doings when he has no right to.

*Johnny’s* mad, and I am glad  
And I know what’ll please him,  
A bottle of wine to treat him fine  
And a pretty little girl to squeeze him.  
(A teasing rhyme.)

Most often when we recited this, we would put the name of some girl in the last line and therefore add to either Johnny’s embarrassment or pleasure.

*Johnny-on-the-job (spot)*

A reliable and energetic person.

*Johnson grass*

A deep-rooted pest, as hard to get rid of as nut grass.

*join*

Adjoin. “His and my land join.”

*joint*

A low-life dive, a gathering place for characters of bad reputation.

*join the birdgang*

To flee suddenly. “When that ’splosion went off, I joined the birdgang going



away from there.”

*joint snake*

See “j’int snake.”

*joker*

An obnoxious person or busybody. “How did that joker get in here?”

*jollify*

To make merry.

*jolly dog*

A merry, good-hearted fellow.

*Jonah*

One believed to bring bad luck.

A layout of scenes and characters for the doubling of parts in a play.

*go to see Miss Jones*

To go to the privy or bathroom.

*jook (juke)*

Jerk, duck or dodge. “He’d jook his head every time you tried to hit him.”

*joree bird*

The ground robin, the cheewink towhee.

*Joseph's coat*

The famous coat the Biblical Joseph wore, and sometimes used in reference to an over-dressed or dudish person.

*josh*

To joke at, to poke fun at, to tease. “If you don’t quit joshing that old preacher, someday he’s going to get mad.”

*jot and tittle*

Every least bit, every detail.

*jounce*

To dandle, to bounce up and down.

*journey's end*

The grave.

*Journeys end* in lovers' meeting.

*by Jove!*

A mild expletive.

*jower*

To argue loudly, quarrel or wrangle, same as jow.

*joy ride*

To take a fling, to have a big time, not caring what happens.

*“Joy to the World”*

A bright and sparkling carol. It was always one of our favorite Christmas serenading pieces. The words are by the venerable Isaac Watts, 1719, and the music by that great major-key composer G.F. Handel, 1744.

“Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Let earth receive her king.

Let ev’ry heart prepare him room

And heav’n and nature sing!”

*jubilee*

A big time, a good get-together, not quite as intensive as joy ride.

*jubous*

Dubious, doubtful.

*by juckies*

An exclamation.

*Judas tree*

See “redbud tree.”

*Judge* not lest ye be judged.

Never *judge* from appearances.

*jug*

Prison.

*not by a jugful*

Certainly not, by no means. “You needn’t count on a cabbage leaf curing that sore place, not by a jugful.”

*juggle*

Jostle, joggle.

*jughead*

A mule, a sorry horse, same as jarhead or pestle-tail.

*go for the jugular*

To aim a finishing stroke, to put forth a final and crushing bit of logical argument, to shoot for the prize. “Did you see George Randall’s argument in today’s *News and Observer* against capital punishment?—He went for

the jugular in it.”

*juice*

Electricity. “Lord, that man’s chest hair caught fire when they shot that juice in him in the ’lectric chair.”

*juke joint*

A cheap restaurant or low gathering place.

*jularker*

Boyfriend.

*jularky*

A wild party, also a cheap boyfriend.

*julep*

An old Southern drink, made by liquor poured on ice to which green mint is added, and usually left to frost over in the refrigerator or to cool down in the old spring house.

*jump*

To scare up, to flush out. “He jumped a rabbit and away it went.”

To grow fast, luxuriantly. “Two weeks ago I put nitrate of soda to my cotton and it’s just jumping.”

*jump bail*

To run away and flee one’s bail.

*jump down one’s throat*

To shout at, to bawl out, scold loudly.

*great jumping beans!*

An exclamation.

*Jumping Jesus!*

An expletive.

*jumping off place*

The end of the world, a weird ungodly place.

*Jumping the Rope*

A children’s game. See “Skipping the Rope.”

*go jump in the river*

A derogatory statement or dismissal command, an expression of disbelief.

*jump jail*

To escape.

*jump on*

To attack, to whip, to spank. "If you don't quit mommicking with that frog, I'm going to jump on you."

*get the jump on*

Get the advantage of, to get into the lead right off. "No. 6 got the jump on all the other horses from the start, and there was no catching him."

*jump on (in) with both feet*

To berate a person or go after something with all vim and vigor.

*jump out of one's skin*

Condition of extreme fright. "I was about to jump out of my skin, he scared me so."

*jumps*

Fidgets, nervous starts.

*holy jumps*

Same as holy jerks.

*jump the broom*

To get married. "Well, Will Green and Rachel Smith have finally jumped the broom."

*jumpy*

Nervous.

*June* is the best month to get married in.

*June bug* has a golden wing.

Lightning bug a plain.

The bedbug has no wing at all

But he gets there just the same.

(A folk rhyme.)

*June bugs (July bugs)*

The cicadas.

*June Sweet'nings*

A pulpy sweetly-flavored early red apple, popular in the Valley in the old days, but rare at the present time and why rare I don't know, for it was a wonder!

"Speaking of June Sweet'nings," Uncle Waverly Lassiter said to me one day, "reminds me of old Guy Fitchett and his wife Bessie. They lived down the road apiece from us, there where the highway turns from Fort Bragg toward Manchester. The house has been torn down long ago and the apple orchard with it to make room for progress on the highway. I believe

there's still one scraggly old tree, though, sort of a stump near the road that sprouts out now and then. The Fitchetts were mighty proud of that apple orchard. And me and my sister Josie loved to eat them apples, them June Sweet'nings, better'n anything in the world. My sister was older'n me and she was quick-legged. One day old Guy found us up in one of his apple trees there gathering and guzzling some, and he switched us out of there and told us to behave ourselves and never bother his apples again—or else. Well, my sister Josie was a quick-tempered little old thing and she didn't forget the switching. No sir, nor the threat.

“Well, I told you a while ago about the steamboat, ‘The Haughton,’ that old man Brady run up the Cape Fear River. He quit running it after the railroads come in. And after some of the locks were washed out in the big freshet, he anchored it in the Cape Fear not far from our house. It stayed there year after year, rotting away.

“One day I was down there, a little barefooted boy proguing around, when I found something lying across the deck about eight feet long, looked like a long black snake. I'd never seen one of those hose pieces before. So I got it loose from its fastening and broke it off, with a little sharp piece of iron at the end of it, and I drug it up the hill to take it home. I met my sister Josie. ‘What is that?’ she said.

“ ‘I dunno,’ I said. ‘I found it down there on the old steamboat rotting away.’

“She looked at it for a while and then she said, ‘I got a use for that.’

“ ‘What use you got?’ I said.

“ ‘I got a use,’ she said. ‘Will you give it to me?’

“So I let her have it. I didn't have any use for it. Didn't know what it was anyhow. That young'un, that sister of mine, she really had a mind. She'd already seen some possibilities in that thing that looked like a snake. No wonder she later married a man who is a professor up there at Chapel Hill and has raised a lot of educated boys and girls of her own.

“Finally she told me what she was planning. She was determined to scare old man Fitchett out of his wits. So we cooked up a thing, she done the cooking, of course, since I was a little shaver two years younger. She was about twelve years old or thirteen and I was about nine or ten, and I looked up to her in her smartness and wisdom.

“So we went toward the Fitchett house and lay around out in the edge of the woods there till we saw old man Fitchett and his wife go down to the barn to milk the cow and tend to things. So we crope into the house there the back way and found their bed. We pulled the cover down and put that thing down at the foot of the bed, quiled it around and stuck its head up, and then put the sheet back and the quilt across it so nobody could tell what was what.

“Well that night after we'd gone home and got our supper Josie said

we'd go back and call on the Fitchetts. So we did, and we sat around and we talked and we kept 'em up quite a while. And Josie got to asking about stories, about snake stories and ghost stories. And old Guy, he was a skeery fellow anyhow and his wife, Mis' Bessie, weren't much better. So long about midnight he up and said, 'Why don't you children go on home and quit talking these wild stories?'

"And so we said we were just about to go. We told 'em goodnight. 'And don't you let the boogers get you,' Mis' Bessie said, all sharp-like, 'going home.'

" 'Oh, we won't,' said Josie, 'We won't. We ain't scared of anything except snakes. And you and Mr. Guy watch out for snakes, too!'

" 'Go on,' said old man Fitchett.

" 'They do tell some of 'em are fearful things,' said Josie. 'My grandpa Avery down at White Oaks got followed by a coachwhup snake once. It rolled down a hill right after him and he nearly run hisself to death. I just remember the story now. He dodged behind a tree and that hoopsnake made for him and soused the p'int of its tail up in the tree behind which Grandpa had dodged!'

" 'I had a hard time to keep from laughing, for she was telling a story we'd both heard happened to a man way off in Georgy or somewhere.

" 'And you know,' she went on, 'The next day that tree had all its leaves quiled up and it died plumb dead.'

" 'We ain't scared of snakes,' said Mis' Bessie. But she was — yessir, scared to death of 'em. And so we went off. We watched them turn back in the house and shut the door, and then we crope back and stood behind a spirea bush outside the window where there were big window panes that we could see through. So we stayed outside and watched 'em.

" 'Purty soon old man Guy took off his clothes and stood naked as a jaybird and my sister of course had to turn away her head at that. Then he put on his long red nightshirt and knitted toque, and I pinched Josie and told her she could look now. And then we watched him go down on his knees and say his prayers. He was a mighty religious old fellow and was superstitious too. While he was a-prayin' Mis' Bessie put on her night gown and undressed herself under it, and I was glad she did, for I didn't want to see her naked, skinny and old as she was. Well, old man Guy he got up and pulled back the cover a little and got in the bed and slid down in it. Then we saw him all of a sudden freeze up, his hands lifting like calling for help and his feet and knees all drewed up. And he lay there shivering and shaking, not saying a word. Truth is he was scared speechless and couldn't speak, I reckon. Mis' Bessie finished saying her prayers and started to get in the bed. She saw him lying there, his face blue as a huckleberry and choking like a man strangling to death.

" 'What is it, what is it, Precious?' she said. She loved him so she always

called him 'Precious.'

"Finally the breath blew from him in a great gust and he got some words. 'Snakes!' he yelled, 'snakes, I fully believe!' And with that he sailed out of that bed, jerking the cover off. And there lay that black thing all quiled up in the dim lamplight, looking like a snake sure enough with its head stuck up. Well sir, old man Fitchett had a heavy walking stick with a piece of iron on it. He used it when he walked about to be sure to keep any bothersome dogs off of him. He was always scared of mad dogs. So he had fixed up this walking stick special heavylike. Mis' Bessie grabbed that walking stick out of his hand, and while Josie and me stood outside just popping with laughing, she sailed onto the snake with that stick. She beat and tore into the feather bed to a fare-you-well. They had two ticks together, all stuffed with feathers. But she busted 'em both. She busted the pillows, too, and in no time the room was so full of feathers you couldn't see a thing. What happened in the turmoil and turning was that not being able to see a thing, in one of her heavy strokes at the snake she laid old man Guy Fitchett right across the side of the head with that thing and plumb addled him. Yes sir, later the doctor had to come and sew up his skelp with fourteen stitches, so he did.

"Well, as you might 'spect, somehow the Fitchetts got on to who done that tricking. They found out that Josie was to blame, and they come down to my house and told my daddy, and he said, 'All right, Josie!' Then he reached for the razor strop.

"So they marched us both up there. Old Mis' Fitchett she give us them cards — you know them things with the fine teeth which you card cotton wool with or used to. Well she give Josie one of 'em and give me the other and put us to cleaning that room. Them feathers had stuck to the rafters and weatherboard in a thick coating of white — it was rough weatherboarding — and it took us three solid days to get that stuff off of there. Mis' Fitchett stood around with that iron-headed stick guarding things and seeing that we cleaned everything well. Old Guy's skelp was slow in healing up, and he was lying in another room with a hot bag of salt to his temple, and so was unable to take part in the proceedings.

"Poor old fellow — he wore a scar long as he lived. Josie and me cried a lot about his scar, but it done no good, none, of course."

*June weddings* are lucky.

### *juniper*

A swamp in which juniper trees grow. We would always refer to it as "the juniper." "No, Mr. Billy's not here, he's down in the juniper getting out telephone poles."

*“Just As I Am”*

One of the Valley’s most popular revival hymns. The words are by Charlotte Elliot, 1836, and the tune by William Bradstreet, 1849. The refrain with its “O lamb of God, I come” is powerful in its call to sinners as the exhorting preacher and congregation pour it out in pulsing fervor. “If this song won’t bring the lost and sinners to the mourners’ bench,” said Reverend Johnson, “I ask you what will.”

*“Just Because She Made Dem Goo-Goo Eyes”*

Another Tin Pan Alley minstrel-like song by John Queen and Hughie Cannon. The chorus made good field-work singing for us children. And at times as we sang we laid aside our hoes and made what we imagined goo-goo eyes to be — often using our fingers to push our eyelids far back and to glare at the world with red, watery eyeballs.

“Just because she made dem goo-goo eyes  
I thought I’d won a home and copped de prize  
She is de best what is  
And I need her in my biz  
Just because she made dem goo-goo eyes.”

*“Just Before the Battle, Mother”*

One of the many fine tragic songs that fittingly came out of the senseless Civil War, a war that for lack of sound and sensible national leadership tore this country apart, filled a common people with unnatural hatred and hundreds of thousands of piteous tight-lipped graves, and for which both Robert E. Lee and the semi-deified Abraham Lincoln are guilty before any justly imagined court of truth. I could continue with a flood of words, but let the song cry its cry — heard and repeated by both Yankee and Rebel many a night on their campgrounds as they waited for the coming of daylight when they would renew the authority-driven struggle to kill each other.

It was written in 1863 by the talented George F. Root who also wrote many other favorite songs including “The Vacant Chair.” He was a native of Sheffield, Massachusetts. Like “Tenting on the Old Camp Ground” by another talented New Englander, Henry C. Work, it was a favorite with our male quartet.

“Just before the battle, Mother,  
I was thinking most of you,  
While upon the field we’re watching,  
With the enemy in view.  
Comrades brave are round me lying,  
Filled with thoughts of home and God.  
For well they know that on the morrow



Some will sleep beneath the sod.  
Farewell, Mother, you may never..."

(And here Ernest Spence would repeat with his bass  
"you may never.")

"Press me to your heart again  
But you'll not forget me, Mother,  
If I'm numbered with the slain."

### *Just Like Me*

A popular children's game. One of the players starts off with a statement, and the other ones in sequence reply to each statement he makes, "Just like me."

I went upstairs.  
Just like me.  
I looked in the mirror.  
Just like me.  
I saw a little monkey.  
Just like me.  
Etc.

And sometimes the players would drag it out, using their own imaginations as to the places they had visited and the things they had seen.

### *justle*

Jostle.

### *just one of those things*

An unfortunate happening that couldn't be helped.

### *just so*

Finicky, exactly right, picayunish. "He wants everything about the house just so."

### *just what the doctor ordered*

The proper thing, what one was expecting or hoping for.

### *juty*

Duty.

### *juvember*

Some etymologists say this is an Algonquin word for a slingshot. For us boys it meant a beanshooter. And what fun we used to have with our shooters! We could buy our rubber bands from most any store. Then we'd cut a forked dogwood sprout and trim this the proper length. Next we'd fit a strip of the band to each of the little forks with strings and a small

slingshot holder where we'd fit a pebble or a single buckshot, and then aim and pull away. All around now we'd go after the birds and often in our games of war go after one another.

# K

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*kag*

Keg.

*kale*

A garden vegetable, money.

*kamerad!*

A call to stop or an acknowledgment of yielding. Same as calf rope.

*kearb*

Curb.

*keen on*

To be attracted by or in love with. "He's keen on that Bunn Level girl, no doubt of that."

*keep*

To remain safe, unspoiled, in good condition. "It's turned cold now and my meat will keep." See "hog killing."

To continue. "It keeps on raining." "Somebody keeps going off with my pencils."

*Keep a stiff upper lip.*

*Keep a thing seven years* and you'll find a use for it.

*keep a thing under one's hat*

To keep one's counsel, to be secretive, to say nothing about a matter of information.

*keep away*

To stay away. "Keep away from that dog or he'll bite you."

*Keep Away*

A ball game. Two captains are chosen, then they choose their teams. The right of first choice may be decided by flipping a coin or by spitting on one side of a short piece of board and one captain choosing “wet” and the other “dry.” The board is then thrown up in the air and when it falls to the ground, the matter is decided. The same method may be used to decide which side has the ball first. The players in possession of the ball throw it back and forth to one another and the members of the opposing team try to intercept it or grab it if it happens to be dropped. When time is up — the ringing of the school bell ending recess or however — the side possessing the ball wins. Or the side that drops the ball the fewest times may be declared winner if that is decided on ahead of time.

*keep care of*

To have the care of, take charge of.

*keep company*

To be sweethearts or to be interested in each other. “They’re keeping company now, and the first thing you know you’ll hear of an engagement.”

Am I my brother’s *keeper*?

*keep going*

To be able to be up and about, to be convalescent. “Claude Jones looks like the shadow of death, but somehow he manages to keep going.”

*keep house* in the mouth of the bag and not in the bottom

Keep one’s feet on the ground. To use good judgment, not get rattled.

*keep in with*

To maintain friendly relations with, continue on the good side of.

*keep kicking till the butter comes*

Never give in, never say die, never stop trying.

When I was a boy I heard about two frogs who fell into an open churn of milk. They struggled and struggled but couldn’t get out. Frog one said, “This is hopeless, we’ll never make it.” Frog number two said, “We must keep kicking.” Finally frog one quit and gave up the ghost, but number two kicked and kept on kicking. Pretty soon he felt butter coming in the milk. He pulled enough of it together to make a pat, crawled up on it and hopped out.

*keep one’s feet on the ground*

To use good judgment, not get rattled.

*keep one’s lips buttoned up*

To refrain from talking.

*keep one's nose clean*

Keep aboveboard, stay honest and untarnished.

*keep quiet*

Be silent.

*keep tab (on)*

To keep score, check on.

*keep the kettle boiling*

Don't let activity diminish.

Often superficial activity, such as political campaigning.

*keep track of*

To keep score or account of.

*Keep thy shop* and thy shop will keep thee.*keep up*

To equal. "You go so fast that I can't keep up."

*keep well*

To stay in good health.

*Keep your head up.**Keep your own counsel.**Keep your pecker up.*

To be strong-minded, courageous.

*Keep your shirt on!*

Don't get angry, impatient, excited.

*keerful*

Careful.

*"Kentucky Babe"*

Another favorite of barbershop quartets. It was written in 1896 and was immediately popular and has remained so. The words are by Richard Buck who in 1903 wrote the lyric for "Dear Old Girl," and the music is by Adam Geibel who never came near creating another song comparable to this classic little gem.

"Skeeters am a-humming in de honeysuckle vine.

Sleep, Kentucky Babe!

Sandman am a-coming to dis little babe of mine,

Sleep, Kentucky Babe!"

And so on to the chorus with its doubly rich harmony—

“Fly away, fly away, Kentucky Babe,  
Fly away and rest.  
Fly away. Lay yo’ sleepy little head  
On yo’ mammy’s breast.  
“Um — um, close yo’ eyes in sleep.”

*kep*

Kept.

*kept being*

Continued. “Year after year William Jennings Bryan kept being defeated.”  
See “Phil McNeill.”

*kerbang*

An imitative sound of a sudden explosion.

*kernels*

Enlarged lymph glands due to some sort of infection.

*kersplosh (kersplash)*

A word imitative of the sound of breaking the surface of water, or splashing.

*ketch*

Catch.

*kettle of fish*

A bad business, a messy entanglement.

*put the kibosh on*

To ruin, to make a mess of.

*kick*

To jilt.

A thrill, pleasure. “I get a kick out of hearing the Ku Klux is in trouble, wherever it is.”

A complaint. “He’s got no kick coming.”

Don’t *kick* a dead dog.

It is hard to *kick* against the pricks.

Don’t *kick* a man when he’s down.

*kicking about*

Lying around in a mess, in disarray. “He leaves his things all the time kicking about.”

*kick in the pants*

A rebuff, a reprimand.

*kick in the slats*

A rebuff.

*kick the bucket*

To die.

*kick the habit*

Stop the habit.

*kick the lid off*

To start any violent action.

*kick the stuffing out of*

To beat, to thrash, to whip unmercifully.

*kick the wind*

To be hanged.

*kick up one's heels*

To have a hilarious time, to go on a spree, to break over the traces.

*kiddo*

A familiar form of address.

*kiddie*

The diminutive of kid.

*kidney-buster*

A hard-riding horse, truck or car.

*kid oneself*

To deceive oneself.

*to kill*

In excess, exaggeratedly. "He laughed to kill at me."

*kill*

Kiln.

*Kill* a snake and hang it in a tree to bring rain.

*Kill* two birds with one stone.

Thou shalt not *kill*.

*killing time*

The cold winter time for killing hogs.

He who *kills* his own body works for the worms.

*Kill your own snakes.*

Mind your own business.

*kilter*

A condition, a regular order. "Don't get things out of kilter."

*kinder (kinda, kind of)*

Somewhat. "He's kinder afraid of his daddy."

*kindling*

Splinters for starting a fire. Usually fat pine splinters with their rich resin can be lighted easily and, when placed under green oak logs, help to start a good hot fire.

*kindly*

Kind of. "When I heard the news, it kindly made me sick."

*Kindness* cannot be bought.

*Kindness* never dies.

A *king* can do no wrong.

The *king* is dead, long live the king.

*kingdom*

A large number, a wide expanse, a multitude. "He's got a whole kingdom of children."

*kingdom come!*

The hereafter. Often an exclamation. Also a long while, limitless, some eventuality. "I'll fight you to kingdom come, that's what I'll do."

*king snake*

A common variety of harmless snake good for catching rodents and keeping poisonous snakes away.

*king's saddle*

Two boys clasp crossed hands to make a saddle and persuade another to take a "ride on the king's saddle." (When girls play the game it is queen's saddle.) They walk along carrying the rider, then fling him forward or drop him by unclasping their hands.

*"King William"*

A children's singing game. The players form a ring with one child in the center. The others march around, usually holding hands, and sing the following song while the one in the center acts out the narrative. For instance,



a boy chooses a girl from the ring, and then goes on through the other business as described below. We used to sing this version at old Pleasant Union School in Harnett County.

“King William was King George’s son,  
Round the royal race he run.  
He wore a star upon his breast,  
Points to the east and points to the west.

“Go choose your east, go choose your west,  
Choose the one that you love best.  
If he’s (she’s) not here to take your part,  
Choose another with all your heart.

“Down on this carpet you must kneel,  
Sure as the grass grows in the field,  
And when you rise up on your feet,  
Salute your bride and kiss her sweet.”

Usually this last command occasioned great gales of laughter. Then the girl who had been chosen became “It” and the game proceeded as before.

### *kinks*

Quirks, rheumatic pains, bothersome conditions, whether physical or mental. “That fellow’s full of all kinds of kinks and is hard to deal with.”

### *kisses*

Small pieces of taffy-like candy.

*Kissing* goes by favor.

### *kissing the bride*

This is permitted of the preacher for good luck.

### *Kiss my ass (my foot).*

A term of derision.

### *kiss of death*

Praise preceding a dismissal.

### *kiss off*

To charge off, to dismiss, cancel. “He wouldn’t pay me and I finally kissed off the whole debt rather than sue.”

### *kit and b’iling*

The whole crowd.

A fat *kitchen* makes a lean will.

everything including the *kitchen sink* (stove)

*kite*

To gad about. "She goes kiting here and yonder all the time and no wonder her children are growing up so mean, poor things."

*kitten*

A jocular affectionate term for a woman.

feel like a *kitten* in a cat's mouth

Helpless, dependent.

*stick to one like a sick kitten to a hot brick*

Over-affectionate, over-devoted.

*to have kittens*

The menses.

To be frightened into hysterics, to cut up in a wild manner. "When that herb doctor sprinkled me with graveyard dust, I thought I'd have kittens all over the floor."

*kittle*

Kettle.

*kitty*

A pot, or money saved up. In poker the amount of bets on the table. "Put something in the kitty, Big Mac, if you're going to play."

*kiver*

Cover.

*klep*

A thief.

*knee baby*

A small child, beginning to walk, usually, who has taken second place to the arm baby.

*knee-high to a duck*

Small, short, a midget.

*knee-high to a grasshopper*

The same.

*knet*

The past tense of knit. "She knet me a pair of socks that lasted the whole winter."

A man without a *knife*

Is not worth a wife.

If a *knife* falls, it means a man is coming; if a fork falls, a woman is coming; if a spoon falls, a child is coming.

Unlucky to give a *knife* to a friend, for knives cut friendship in two.

He who lives by the *knife* will die by the knife.

*knife in the back*

To betray, to turn traitor to.

*knight of the green cloth*

A gambling hall proprietor.

*Knives and Forks*

A finger rhyme, usually amusing to a little child.

Here's the mother's knives and forks,

(The fingers are interlaced, with the backs together.)

Here's the mother's table

(The fingers are turned down now, showing the smooth level joints on top.)

Here's my sister's looking glass,

(Now the little fingers are brought up and they make a point by joining the tips.)

And here's the baby's cradle.

(The index fingers are brought to a point and the hands are rocked from side to side.)

*knobhead*

A mule, a dull, stupid person.

*knock*

To low rate, to deprecate. "I wouldn't want to say anything to knock a fellow Mason."

*Knock* and it shall be opened unto you.

*knock about*

To poke about, waste time, move around aimlessly.

*knock along*

To get along so-so, to fare only middling well.

*Knock at the door*, (Tap on the forehead.)

Peek in, (Look into the eyes.)

Lift up the latch, (Push the nose up.)

Walk in, (Touch the mouth.)

Take a chair. (Tickle under the chin.)

(A tickling rhyme.)

*knock down*

To be sold or auctioned off to the highest bidder.

To cheat.

*knocked into a cocked hat*

Badly damaged, confused, flummoxed.

*knock for a loop*

To hit a stunning blow, give a shocking surprise, or deflate a windbag.

*knock galley west*

Same as knock for a loop.

*knock off*

To stop work.

*knock on wood*

A superstitious custom. When one makes a braggadocio statement or a particular wish, he knocks on wood to help the statement from failing.

*knockout*

A first-rate person, a nonpareil, a thing of beauty.

Little *knocks* split great blocks.

*knock up*

To make pregnant, to big.

*knock your eye out*

To shock, surprise, impress strongly.

*knothead*

A mule, a surly, stupid person, much the same as knobhead.

*knot on a log*

A good for nothing.

*Know* that God will bring every act into judgment.

*Know* thyself.

don't *know* B from bull's foot

For the living *know* that they shall die, but the dead know not anything.

We *know* what we are, but not what we may be.

*knowned*

Knew.

*Knowledge* is power.

A little *knowledge* is a dangerous thing.

Much *knowledge* is a weariness to the flesh.

He *knows* his stuff.

He that *knows* not, and knows not that he knows not, is a fool — avoid him.

He who *knows* nothing is an authority in all things.

*not that I know of*

So far as I know.

*knuckle down*

To set to work in real earnest.

*knucklehead*

A stupid person.

*knucks*

Knuckles.

*knucks on*

In the game of marbles, one of the players who is shooting can call out ahead of anybody else, "Knucks on the line" or "ring," and then he has the privilege of putting his knuckles over the edge of the ring, which would give him a little nearer shot at the dinahs within the ring. If someone shouts out "Venture knucks!" then the player is denied that privilege.

*kook*

A nut, a lunatic. "Yeh, most of them psychiatrists up there are kooks."

*kowtow*

Bow down to, make obeisance, to act the sycophant to.

*Ku Klux*

To give the Ku Klux treatment to a person is to intimidate him, beat him up.

*Ku Klux Klan*

A secret and, until recently, a masked organization, mainly in the Southern part of the United States. (The law now prohibits masks.) This terrible order was created after the Civil War to assure white supremacy. In my section of the country, down in Harnett County, my Uncle Heck was supposed to be one of the organizers there. And the reason I heard him give for its creation, when I was a boy, seemed right enough — the restoration of law and order there. Maybe there could have been some sort of excuse for this order a hundred years ago, but there is no need for its resurgence in these late years — a happening due to ignorance and to plain hard prejudice.

The officers of the organization have outlandish and laughable titles. (They would be laughable if so many innocent people had not suffered cruelty and persecution.) They are:

The Imperial Wizard (Supreme Chief Executive)  
Imperial Klaiff (Supreme First Vice-President)  
Imperial Klazik (Supreme Second Vice-President)  
Imperial Klokard (Supreme Lecturer)  
Imperial Kludd (Supreme Chaplain)  
Imperial Kligrapp (Supreme Secretary)  
Imperial Klabee (Supreme Treasurer)  
Imperial Kladd (Supreme Conductor)  
Imperial Klarogo (Supreme Inner-Guard)  
Imperial Klexter (Supreme Outer-Guard)  
Imperial Klonsel (Supreme Attorney)  
Imperial Night-Hawk (Supreme Courier)

And four Imperial Klokann, constituting a Board of Auditors and Supreme Advisors. These shall be known as the Imperial Wizard and his Genii.

When I was about twelve years old I got a firsthand account as to some of the Ku Klux activities in Harnett County. Old Reuben Matthews, a Negro farm worker, after much pleading on my part, told me what had happened to him one dark summer night. I remember his account as vividly today as if I had just heard it yesterday. (We children called him Uncle Reuben, a title of respect given to older Negroes, just as we referred to old Negro women as Aunt so and so.)

It was a clear dry morning in May. He and I were out in the field harvesting my father's oats. He was seventy and I was twelve. Round and round we went, his cradle dipping with a whup-swish, whup-swish, and he laying the handfuls of cut oats behind him, and me following with all my manful might tying these handfuls into larger bundles later to be hauled to the barn there across the sun-drenched fields.

I was feeling good that morning and Uncle Reuben felt extra spry. I could tell from the way he swung his cradle. And the reason we both felt good was that my Uncle Heck was coming up from Wilmington, where he was the postmaster, to pay us one of his rare visits. I had waked at the rooster-crow that morning, and a little sweet feeling had come quick inside my breast remembering the letter we'd received from him the day before saying that he would be up to visit us. And when I told Uncle Reuben that Uncle Heck was coming, he beat his old hat twice against his leg and said, "Hot dog, I'd rather slap these two eyes on that man than anybody that walks this wide green earth!"

"And he'll bring you a plug of that good Apple tobacco, won't he?" I said.

"That he will, bless his sweet heart," said Uncle Reuben. "He allus does."

Uncle Heck was a wonder to me—my hero.

As a young man he was in the great Civil War. He actually fought at Gettysburg and lived to tell the tale — except that it was very hard to get him to tell it. Once, though, he had unloosed and talked with me about it. We were sitting by the fire one winter night and I had worn him down, I guess, with my pleading, for he had relented enough to get started by saying there was a lot of killing that went on those three days at Gettysburg. I already knew this from my little Confederate history. And the worst thing about it for him, he continued slowly, even worse than the wounded men lying out in the hot sun and calling for their mothers while they died—worse than that, he said, was the whickering and the wild neighing of the horses that were jerking and lunging about with broken legs and their stomachs all tore to pieces and their insides dragging on the ground.

Uncle Heck loved horses and he always kept a nice limber-legged one for his buggy.

"And you were lying out there wounded too, wasn't you, Uncle Heck? Yes sir," I declared.

"Yes, I was lying out there," he said.

"You were tough, though," I prompted jubilantly. "They couldn't kill you."

"Yeh, tough is the word, and I got over it somehow. I was brought home in a wagon on a bed of wheat straw. And I stunk so bad from my wounds that your grandmammy wouldn't let 'em bring me in the house. Dr. McNeill had to work on me in the barn till the rotted parts of my flesh got cleaned up and healed some." He stopped and looked up at the clock on the mantelpiece. "Time for you to go to bed, boy."

"And you got wounded in six places, didn't you, Uncle Heck, in that charge across the wide field? Six bullets hit you, didn't they? Papa said they did."

He chuckled. "I got peppered all right with them minny balls. But I lived. Don't you reckon I lived? Yes sir, tough, you said." And he laughed and smoothed back his handsome clean-cut gray moustache.

Uncle Heck always wore nice clothes, kept himself trim and neat, carried a cane, and in the summertime he always had a flower in his buttonhole, a cape jessamine bloom if he could get one. My hero!

I laughed a bit too and hurried on. "Did you ever see General Lee, Uncle Heck, did you?"

"Many a time, boy, many a time. And a sorrowful, bothered man he was too."

“What was he bothered about, Uncle Heck? Oh, I know — losing all so many of his boys in gray, that’s what.”

“Maybe that too. But I reckon what bothered him most was trying to make heads or tails of the whole thing he was tangled up in. Oh yes, that bothered him considerable. It bothered a lot of us.”

He looked up at the clock again. “I’ve told you it’s bedtime. Go on, boy.”

But I was quick with my big question. “How many Yankees did you kill, Uncle Heck? I bet a lot. How many?”

“Maybe I killed some, maybe I didn’t. I did a lot of shooting. I’ve prayed on my knees, though, many times that I didn’t kill a single solitary man. And if I had, I begged God to forgive me for it.” Then he called toward the kitchen to my mother, “Betty, come get this young’un and put him to bed. He’s pestering me to death about that old Civil War and I don’t allow that.”

And pulling a cheroot from his vest pocket, he bit off the end with his fine gold-filled front teeth, bent over, stuck a lightwood splinter into the fireplace of coals and leaning back brought its frying flame up and lighted his cheroot with great manly puffings. I watched him with the saliva working in my mouth. The rattling of the dishes in the kitchen where my mother was washing them after supper suddenly stopped, and she came in and in spite of my pleadings sent me sternly off to bed.

Some of these things out of past days flitted through my mind that fair May morning as I followed Uncle Reuben in the oat field. Whup-swish went the blade. The sun climbed up the sky and the sweat poured down. After a while he slung the cradle over his shoulder and said it was time to get some water to drink. We went to the apple tree at the edge of the field where our water jug was shaded in a bunch of pawpaw bushes. We sat down and fanned ourselves, and I took a long drink from the jug first because I was white and Uncle Reuben drank second because he was black, and that was the way of things with no questions asked. As he tilted the jug back I watched the water go gluk-gluk in wads down his stringy, wrinkled old throat — a throat as black and scaly as the hide of that alligator I had seen in the circus at Dunn. Then I noticed another thing. The sleeve of his ragged homemade shirt slipped back and there were two round scar spots showing on his forearm.

He set the jug down, reached back in the shade, fanned himself a bit more and pulled out a piece of his petrified rock and began sharpening the cradle blade. Once more his old sleeve slipped back up his forearm from his lifted hand and there were those spots again. I happened to notice them, idly at first. And then I stared at them. He saw I was looking at his arm. He pushed the cradle from him and slid the whetstone back into his pocket. He pulled his sleeve down and sat scrubbing his grizzled chin with the hard



palm of his hand the yellow color of a mulberry root. Then he pulled out a piece of homemade tobacco twist and pinched off a piece and stuck the twist out to me. I shook my head though I was dying to try it, and my greedy saliva was working as always. He sat there munching the tobacco contentedly for a moment with his hard gums, then squirted a bit of slightly stained yellow juice out to one side. He began chuckling.

"You notice things, don't you?" he said.

"I dunno, Uncle Reuben," I answered uncertainly.

"Yeh, you do. You got sharp eyes. I notice that 'bout a lot of things. And now you done crossed the line of 'countability, ain't you?"

" 'Countability?"

"That's the time when a young'un gets up where he can think for hisself, like grown folks, gets responsible for his actions. The preachers and teachers tell about it."

"Yes," I said, "I already know about that."

"So I reckon I mought as well tell you about them spots you been looking at, now that you got up so far in the world. I see you keep looking at 'em."

"Yeh, I bet you've had bad carbuncles like my brother had."

He chuckled once more. "No, not carbuncles," he said.

"I had a bad carbuncle on my thigh," I said, "and it left a round scar much the same."

"Carbuncles don't make marks like that," he said. "I know."

"What was it, Uncle Reuben? What caused it?"

"Sump'n a lot worse'n carbuncles."

"What? What was that?"

"Hot lead, boy," he answered abruptly, "bullet lead."

"Bullets?"

"That's what I say. That's where I was shot 'way back in them days."

"You shot? Good gracious. When?"

"Back in the Ku Klux times."

I knew about the Ku Klux of course. And now I remembered I had heard in past times that Uncle Reuben as a young man had been mixed up in some kind of trouble, some kind of killing. But I had never heard the story. Nobody would talk about it. My father wouldn't. And now at last maybe I was going to hear all about it. I squirmed up a bit closer.

"Did the Ku Klux shoot you?" I asked eagerly.

"Yeah, one of them Ku Klux did."

"Who was it, Uncle Reuben?"

"Now ain't that a come-off! You know good and well I ain't going to tell you 'bout no 'ticular person. It was just the Ku Klux shot me. I'll show you sump'n else." Creaking to his feet he undid his homemade britches, pulled up his shirt and showed me another spot on his side. Then he turned

around and shamelessly dropped his trousers farther down disclosing another mark low on his stringy, seamed stern. "Yes suh, son," he went on, "that's where them bullets hit me." He stuck his shirt in and buttoned his britches again. "They sho' poured the lead into me that time."

I sat there staring at him horrified—yet thrilled too. I was all in a shivering tumult to hear more.

"How did it happen? How did it, Uncle Reuben?" I said. "They didn't have any right to treat you like that. Lord a'mercy, you oughta got a gun and killed somebody!"

He stared at me. "I did kill somebody, son," he said. I blinked at him. He went on. "When I heard them Ku Kluxers outside my door I told 'em not to come in 'cause I was right inside there and I had my axe handy. 'Don't come in here,' I said, 'I'll kill the first man breaks in my door!' But that didn't stop 'em. They whoomed and lunged against the door and they finally broke it down. And the first man that tumbled in was Mr. Ed Gaskins, and what did I do with my axe? I split him clean down to the belly-button. Lord, Lord, I split him on down."

And then I remembered too that I had heard something about a Mr. Gaskins that got killed long, long ago in the Ku Klux trouble. Speechless, I gazed at Uncle Reuben. He was no longer just Uncle Reuben but a man with something suddenly mysterious and strange about him. He had killed somebody. He seemed farther away than before—bigger, stronger, more lonely.

He chuckled again and dug into the ground with one of his long-nailed bony fingers. "Course I been sorry for that a long, long time. I been sorry. But I been done forgive for it by de old Master up there," and he gestured toward the sky. Then a medley of little whickering chuckles broke from him and he spat a spurt of brown juice now off to one side. "But tough, I was tough! They couldn't kill this nigger, no sir! There I was lying on that floor that night and that Ku Klux man standing over me with the smoking pistol in his hand and the other dead body lying there all split open, bleeding on the floor. Well, I could see that man against the door light and I could smell the powder in the room too, even smell the fresh blood. I still had my good senses about me. And you know what that Ku Klux with the pistol said while he was standing over me?"

"No, I don't," I spoke up breathlessly.

"I heard him say. 'I reckon that's done for you, you damn black scoundrel. But I'll make sho' of it.' And he bent over in the dark and he fired that last bullet smack at me. He'd already shot me five times. And that made six. But maybe in the dark his hand was too trembly, so he just grazed the side of my skelp here." And Uncle Reuben lifted his old hat back, pushed up a bit of his kinky gray hair and there, sure enough, along the side above his ear was a slick hairless mark.

"Lord," I breathed, "Lord!"

"Yeh, they shot me down like a dog," he went on easily, even proudly. "Maybe I was deserving of it some. I was a young buck then and I had just got my freedom. Maybe I was shooting off my mouth round and about a little too much. And that's how come they come waiting on me in the deep dead of night, them Ku Kluxers."

"It must have scared you 'bout to death. How did they look, Uncle Reuben, how?"

"Lord, boy, they had bedsheets over their heads and horns sticking up through that headgear and they had great booger goggle-eyes. Oh, my goodness! Makes me shiver thinking of it now. Long time it was since it happened, but still makes me shiver. I tell you one thing, though, them Ku Kluxers made the niggers, the sassy niggers, keep in their place."

"Did you know who it was shot you, Uncle Reuben? Who?"

"Sure I knowed him. He pulled off his sheet headgear and he looked down at me lying on the floor that night. I seen him clear. I would've knowed his voice anyhow, 'cause him and me had worked in the fields together many a time, in fact—ah—yea, many a time."

"Who was it?"

"Now behave yourself. You know I ain't gonna tell you that."

"Please. Do I know him?"

"Hush, boy."

"After that what happened? What happened?"

"Well, they carried the dead man off from there, away from my house, and later I crawled out through the door and across the fields and got into a ditch. I lay in that ditch all that night and the next day, and that's where Nedgelena, the gal I later married, found me. And she and her mammy hid me in the smokehouse and treated me with poultices and with tallow and turpentine salve till I got well."

"And then what, Uncle Reuben?"

"Well, I laid mighty low, hid out, as I say, and am here to tell you. And by the time I got well the high feelings had sort of ca'med over. People had learnt better. But I moved off to Sampson County anyhow and farmed there for a few years, then come back here on your daddy's land, and I been here ever since. Yes, sir, people were riled up back in them days and all on account of us niggers."

"No, no, it was more mixed up, was deeper than that, Uncle Reuben," I said, remembering my reading. "The two parts of the country had just grown apart, different sorts of civilization. They thought differently about things. And the North kept imposing on the South, taking her trade away from her, passing laws in Congress against her."

"Maybe so, son — Lord help my life, what do I see yonder!" And he sprang to his feet quick as a young man. I turned my head and then I jumped

up too, for there coming across the field all dressed out in his white linen suit and Panama hat and swinging his gold-headed cane in the summer sun was Uncle Heck. Both Uncle Reuben and I had been so intent on the Ku Klux story that we hadn't heard the sound of the buggy or the trotting horse coming up the lane at all. Uncle Reuben now quickly spat out his tobacco juice, cleared his throat, spat again, wiped his face, pushed his kinky hair up and finished buttoning his trousers — primping himself.

"How you there, Reuben?" Uncle Heck called, stepping along toward us. Already Uncle Reuben was grinning and bowing up and down, his hat in his hand while he answered back.

"Bless the Lord, there you is, Mr. Heck — a sight for sore eyes. Yes sir, glory be to the Lord on high!" And he scrambled out to meet Uncle Heck. I stood there, a little twelve-year-old sweat-sodden fool, watching those two older fools. For as they met there in the middle of the lone oat field — Uncle Heck with his fine summer clothes and his gray clean-cut military moustache and gold-rimmed eyeglasses and Panama hat and cane, a gentleman great and airy, and Uncle Reuben, smelly and dust begrimed and a Negro at that — Uncle Heck threw his arms around him and hugged him and Uncle Reuben hugged him back. Without hardly knowing what I did I picked up the water jug and went nearer to them.

"Well, you old black scoundrel, you ain't aged a day since last year," said Uncle Heck.

"And you, Mr. Heck, you looks lak sump'n stepped out of the bandbox of heaven, always a spick and span gentleman." And Uncle Reuben peered at him. "One thing I miss though," he said, "that purty flower you allus wears in your buttonhole."

"Well, I've stopped that, Reuben, stopped it," Uncle Heck laughed. "The gay girls have quit smiling at me since I'm so old, so I said to myself, 'What use is there in buying a flower any more?' You keeping well, Reuben?"

"Yes suh, yes suh, tip top."

And then Uncle Heck looked out at me and gestured with his fabulous cane. "Which one is that?"

"That's the one named Paul, suh."

"Hi, Paul son, how you doing, boy? My goodness, you've grown!"

"All right, Uncle Heck," I stammered, my head swimming with joy. Lord, I loved that man!

"It's hard to keep up with 'em all," he said to Uncle Reuben. "Brother Bill has so many. How many has he got now?"

"Mercy me, I don't know, Mr. Heck, a whole passel."

"How many are you now, son?" Uncle Heck called.

"There are — six of us now, Uncle Heck," I stuttered.

"Well, well. And here I have got only one and she married and off at that. Is he smart, Reuben?"

"Yes, he do the best he kin," Uncle Reuben chuckled. "But stories — that's what he likes best — stories. He's all the time after me about things — about darky songs, whether I done seen a ha'nt or not, old folks' tales."

"Uhm, Paul, you say. Yes, I remember him well enough. Always pestering me to tell him about the war."

"Yessuh, that's him," said Uncle Reuben.

"Well, if he wants to hear a real tale, you ought to tell him about the Ku Klux times, Reuben."

"Yes sir, I told him something about that, seeing how manhood is about to come on him and he done crossed the line of 'countability."

Uncle Heck turned to me. "So Reuben told you about the Ku Klux?"

"Yes sir," I answered.

"Did he tell you about poor Ed Gaskins?"

"Yes sir," I gulped, "the one that got killed with the axe."

"And what else?" And Uncle Heck was staring sharply yet smilingly at me now.

"That's all, Mr. Heck," said Uncle Reuben quickly. "That's all."

"And a Ku Kluxer shot Uncle Reuben down in the floor," I added.

"That's right, that's right," said Uncle Heck. "And did Reuben tell you who the Ku Kluxer was?"

"Now, Mr. Heck, you know I know better'n that."

"No sir, he didn't."

"Tell him, Reuben," and he laughed. "He and his line of accountability. That would be a story to last him for a while."

But Reuben shook his head. "Lord, no, sir," he said.

And then Uncle Heck pushed the end of his cane at Reuben and laughed again. "You know what today is, Reuben?" he said.

"No sir."

"It's an anniversary. It's the sixth of May." Then he looked over at me. "Thirty-eight years ago it was, son, when he was shot. Walking along downtown yesterday I thought of it. And in honor of that occasion, Reuben, I brought you a whole box full of Apple tobacco, there in the buggy." And he gestured off toward the house.

"The Lord bless you, the Lord bless you from his heavenly bosom!" said Uncle Reuben. And he grabbed Uncle Heck's hand and held it and kissed it. Uncle Heck laughed again and called out to me, as he winked his eye all merry like.

"Look here, son," he said. "Look! You see Reuben kissing my hand. Well, this is the very hand that shot him down one night thirty-eight years ago."

I dropped the water jug with a bump.

Now the bell in the yard of our little house across the field began to ring for dinner, and Uncle Reuben and Uncle Heck turned and moved on

across the field. Forgetting the water jug, I followed after. And as I went, the word "six" came foolishly in my mind — "six." Uncle Heck had been shot with six bullets on the field of Gettysburg, and six times he had shot Uncle Reuben. And they both lived. Six for six. Tough, yes, both of them tough.

And there they were walking in the summer weather ahead of me. Uncle Heck's arm was around Uncle Reuben's shoulders, and they both were laughing and talking over the old days — cronies, bosom buddies. Eh, Lord!

### *John Kuners*

Negro mummers. There used to be a lot of Christmas mumming and serenading in the old days. One of the most impressive Valley customs of all was the visit of the John Kuners. These were young Negro boys and men who went around with tatters and strips of gay colors sewn to their clothes. Some of them wore women's garb. They were disguised in all sorts of homemade masks, some representing fox faces, 'possums, hogs, Rawhead-and-bloody-bones, Plat-eye and the Headless Girl, which they called Kuner faces. They would rattle cow bones and dried-out horse ribs, blow rams' horns, blow harmonicas, toot on guano bugles, and collect pennies and food from door to door. The leader often carried a long blacksnake whip which he whizzed through the air like an exploding firecracker. It used to be hard to get the children to go to bed so old Santa Claus could look after their stockings until the John Kuners had gone by singing their song about—

"They's misery in the mountains,  
They's smoke upon the hill,  
And they ain't no coming shuteye  
Till the Kuners had their fill.  
Hah — low,  
Here we go!  
Hah — low!"

The custom has long ago died out, and it's a pity. For it was a fearsome and thrilling sight to see them coming up the lane in the darkness with their pine-splinter torches waving above their wild costumes and making their terrible and outlandish noises. Old men have told me they heard this custom was brought over from Africa or the West Indies with the first slaves.

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You can't tell what's in a bottle by the *label*.

*Labor* overcometh all things.

The *laborer* is worthy of his hire.

It is bad luck to walk under a *ladder*.

like holding a *ladder* for a thief

*ladies*

Gambling cards. "All right, fellows, bring out the ladies and let's get started."

*lady boarders*

Prostitutes.

*ladybug (ladybird)*

A small insect that eats other insects. There was an old belief that it represented the Virgin Mary in disguise.

*Ladybug, ladybug,*

Fly away home.

Your house is on fire.

Your children will burn.

(Children's rhyme.)

*Ladybug, ladybug,* fly away home.

Bring me good weather whenever you come.

(A divination rhyme.)

*lady killer*

A fop, a dandy.



*lady slipper* or *lady's slipper*

Known also as moccasin flower, perhaps because of its one flat-headed blossom. It grows from Manitoba to Georgia in swamplands and dampish woods. Its greatest value to me is its poetic name. A tincture from its root was once supposed to be good for nervous diseases.

*laid by*

To be hilled up, or to have received the last plowing for the summer. See "lay by."

*I laid off to do.*

I planned to do, intended to do.

*laid on the shelf*

Retired, out of circulation, passé.

*who laid the rail*

An old saying of comparison. "I've knowed that boy ever since who laid the rail."

*laid up*

Something waiting, something to be done later. "I've got a talking-to laid up for you."

Sick, bedridden.

*laig*

Leg.

*lally-gagging*

Idle talk.

Flirtatious lovemaking.

*lambang*

To beat, to strike strongly. "Quit lambanging that bell, will you."

*lame duck*

A politician who has been defeated in reelection or has completed the allowable term and still has some time to serve.

*lamentate*

Complain, lament.

*lamp*

To look or to gaze at.

A *lamp* unto my feet and a light unto my path.

*lampas*

Excessive swelling of a horse's or mule's gums.

*lamp chimney salesman*

A front man or a con man.

*between me and you and the lamppost*

In confidence, secretive.

*lamps*

The eyes.

*lanch*

Lance. "Let the doctor lanch that boil and you'll get better."

Ill fares the *land* to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

Lives there a man with soul so dead  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native *land*.

*a land*

A strip of land the width of a plow's cutting in the breaking of the soil.

*my land!*

A mild exclamation.

*see how the land lies*

To find out the situation, also to find out how much one owes, as at a store.

*land office business*

Huge trading activity, large profits. "Since liquor can be served, the restaurants have been doing a land office business."

*land of Nod*

Sleepy-time land. Also a place in the Asiatic world where Cain fled after murdering his brother Abel and where, according to many of the fundamentalists in the Valley, the Negro race had its beginning.

One day when I was teenage boy I was helping Cousin Arthur Searcey chop out his spring cotton. He was a deacon in Little Bethel Church, also a justice of the peace. Whish, whish, went our hoes in the soft loamy earth — at least mine went that way — as we thinned the long spraddle-legged young cotton stalks and edged out the crab grass. I was in the lead of him naturally, me being me and always in "such a swivet," as he put it, and he always "taking it easy," as I put it, and looking after his weak back. I was helping him with his cotton because of sympathy for my Cousin Lillian. She had in her late thirties married Arthur Searcey in his bachelor middle

age some few years before to reform him and as everybody knew was having a poverty-stricken time of her life.

That morning too my father had said, "Go down there and help your Cousin Arth with his cotton. The grass is about to get it. No, go help your Cousin Lillian, I mean."

Yes, Cousin Arth was a poor provider, in fact hardly any provider at all. He instinctively shied away from anything that meant sweat and hard work.

Cousin Lillian had reformed him all right. Since the day of their marriage three years before he had not touched a drop of liquor. A wonderful moral reform it was. But he who had had at least a little bit of get-up-and-get in his drinking days now had lost even that when he quit liquor. It was as if he felt so proud of his moral reform that his self-esteem and self-satisfaction were sufficient to sustain his inner man in his laziness. He felt no prickings of conscience as his wife ironed and washed and milked the scrawny ticky cow and did what she could in selling a bit of butter and a few eggs now and then to make ends meet and to tithe something for foreign missionary work, which subject of the heathen lay heavy in her tender heart. Hadn't he quit drinking and carousing around, and what more could you ask?

Maybe in his slubbery way Cousin Arth loved Cousin Lillian. Maybe he didn't. I don't know. But I know he loved the courthouse in the county seat, all right. Nothing suited him better than to hang around the crowd there and mix among the political deadbeats and perennial candidates for office every chance he got.

Finally somehow he got up brass and energy enough to meet with the right precinct boss and so got himself appointed a rural justice of the peace. And sweet it was to his ears when the first defendant addressed him as "jedge" — a feeble-witted Negro boy named Jay Gould who had robbed one of Cousin Lillian's hen's nests and whom Cousin Arth, much to my disgust — for I was there at the time — and Cousin Lillian's patient protestation, declared must be tried.

And spitting a stream of tobacco juice and eyeing a pocket of space in the northeast part of the horizon where perhaps he saw some image of majesty that resided there as he deliberated, he pronounced a fine of fifty cents on Jay Gould and ordered him to work it out then and there picking cotton for him, the said judge. "The power and dignity of the law must be upheld," he said.

And all day Cousin Arth had sat about overseeing Jay Gould as he worked out his fine, a full day's work.

Since early morning now we had been at the chopping, and it was getting on toward ten o'clock and the air was becoming a little steamy. Every now and then Cousin Arth would stop, look biliously around the world, cock

his eye toward the northeast — a funny habit he had — wipe his forehead with his sleeve and, with his middle finger, carefully push back the looping strands of his tobacco-drenched moustache. Then he would listlessly resume his chopping, making one laggard stroke while I made two or three. I heard him muttering to himself there behind me.

“What say?” I said.

“I say you’re allus working like your britches were full of red ants,” he growled.

Without looking around I spoke right back — “I reckon it’s better’n having the dead lice dropping off you.”

Oh, yes, I was brash and spoke right out at him because I had so little respect for him and because too, as my folks said, I had such a high temper.

“Uhm, uhm, listen at him,” he mumbled. He stood a moment, leaning his chin on the knob of his hoe handle and staring down toward the creek. “Whew, it’s gonna be a scorcher,” he called.

“Come on, Cousin Arth, you’ve not even started sweating yet,” I called back. “Cool, man, it’s cool compared to what it’s gonna be about two o’clock. Remember, when the fall comes, you want a bale or two of cotton to sell, want to feel that good old money jingling in your pockets.”

“You and your money!” he cackled.

“Cousin Lillian’s money then,” I answered angrily. “And besides the almanac says it’s likely to be wet weather later this month and we want to get this cotton cleaned up and plowed and ready for it.”

Cousin Arth swore by the almanac, but I didn’t.

“You and your prophecy,” he said.

“I know this is sorry work for his honor the judge,” I jeered. “But the Bible do say a man’s got to live by the sweat of his brow.”

“You and your—” Then he stopped, for like all the Valley people he had his religious streak and didn’t dare speak disrespectfully of the holy book.

He resumed his pecking, sickly strokes, and soon I was out to the end of my row and coming back on another toward him.

Later a mule and buggy came along the lane beyond the rail fence nearby, driven by a Negro youth all dressed out in a blue suit and derby hat and high stiff collar with a red tie, and with a white rose stuck in the lapel of his coat. By his side sat a teenage Negro girl in a white muslin frock and blue scarf and with a great droopy yellow beribboned hat fitted somewhat sideways on her head. Cousin Arth heard the buggy wheels and looked off as the vehicle stopped beyond the fence and the boy pulled off his derby hat and held it extended in front of him.

Finally the boy spoke over the fence toward us, bowing his body respectfully forward. “Mawning, suh,” he said.

“Yeah,” Cousin Arth grunted, eyeing him.

"Is you the jedge, suh?" the boy inquired.

I snorted as I saw the judicial feeling take sudden hold of Cousin Arth. "I am that," he said loftily and sternly. And he stamped his hoe against the ground and stood with it straight beside him like a Roman soldier with a spear. "And I reckon I can guess what you want."

The girl slapped her hands together, leaned over sideways and burst into a cascade of high giggles, then as if abashed, bowed her droopy hat over and sat silent. But I could see her round shoulders shaking with stuffed-in merriment.

"Well, yes suh, us wants to git j'ined—merried, suh."

"You do, eh?" said Cousin Arth, still standing straight and stern and not moving.

"Yes suh," said the boy.

"And what does the girl say?"

The girl threw up her hands again and let out a little shrill hilarious scream and rocked from side to side.

"Well, I can see she's as big a fool as you are," Cousin Arth called out. "How old are you?"

"'Bout eighteen, suh," said the boy.

"And the yaller gal — how old is she?"

"How old's you?" I heard the boy murmur to her.

"I's 'bout sixteen," said the girl in a small but remarkably clear childish voice.

"All right then," Cousin Arth called in his stern commanding manner. "Take hands."

The boy put his derby hat back on his head, took one of the girl's hands in his and held it up before him. And Cousin Arth intoned loudly through the gentle spring air—

"Nought's a nought,  
Figger's a figger,  
Kiss your bride,  
You dirty nigger."

The boy and girl sat still. The fields were still too, and Cousin Arth and I were motionless in them. Only the creaking of the harness hames was heard and the motion of the mule's great gullet head seen as it dropped down and the huge whiskered lips began gnawing hungrily at the sparse grass in the fence jamb. The boy looked out sideways and finally said, "Is they any more, Jedge?"

"Ain't no more," Cousin Arth said.

"You mean that's all, Jedge?"

"All," said Cousin Arth loudly, "and it'll hold you till the cows come home."

"Then we's merried, Jedge?" the boy timidly called.

"Yes, you're married," said Cousin Arth roughly. "I pronounce you man and wife. And it'll cost you a dollar." He held out his hand before him and then shouted, "Do as I say—kiss your bride!"

The bridegroom gave the girl a tiny bump with his mouth against her cheek, at which her body swayed and undulated like a flower in the wind. But there was no giggle from her now.

The boy got out of the buggy, climbed over the fence and came up to Cousin Arth, bareheaded and with vast respect. He put a dollar in the "jedge's" still outstretched hand and the "jedge" dropped it carelessly into his shirt pocket as if it were of no importance to him at all now. The bridegroom began bowing and backing away.

"Thankee, suh, thankee, suh."

"You're mashing down my young cotton," Cousin Arth suddenly yelled, and he lifted his hoe threateningly. The boy slammed his derby on, turned and vaulted over the fence light as a deer. He sprang into the buggy, and he and his bride drove on down the road, sitting straight and stiff side by side. Only once did he look back — a quick little snatched glance. Cousin Arth rested on his upright hoe handle again and gazed after them, his moustache wiggling in a sardonic smile. I looked at him in a sort of sullen stupefaction.

"Seems like you might have asked them their names," I finally said with all the sarcasm I could command.

"It don't make no difference," said Cousin Arth. "And look," he continued, gesturing off, "she's got her head laying over on his shoulder now. First huckleberry thicket they find they'll stop and go to it."

"That was a lowdown thing to do!" I said fiercely.

"Do how?" he queried with a chuckle, as he swiftly took the dollar from his shirt pocket, smoothed it in his hand and stowed it deep inside his old trousers.

"To pretend to marry them like that. To say that mean piece of sorry poetry over them like that—to—to—" I was stuttering with rage.

"It don't make no difference," he repeated. "I learned that when I was a boy."

"Learned what?" I snapped.

"Learned it don't make no difference — not with niggers."

"They're not even married," I said. "And their children will—"

"Of course they're married," he said. "You heard me pronounce them man and wife."

"Ah, Lord!" I exploded. "What a way to treat a human being!" He turned and stared at me. "A nigger ain't a human being," he said. I stared at him in turn.

"And where do you get that crazy idea?" I snorted. And I began hoeing

furiously again.

He smiled at me and walked along with me, his hoe in his hand. I could feel his poor-white supercilious smile.

"From the best place in the world to get ideas," he said. "You ought to know — being as you are so smart in Scripture and got the Bible medal at Buie's Creek Academy and teach the Bible class in Little Bethel Church."

"Well, the Bible don't say a Negro's not a human being, it never says that!" I half-shouted.

"Oh, yes it does," he chortled. "Says so when you put two and two together. Long ago my daddy pointed it all out to me and his daddy before him. And I've hearn Preacher Wicker say the same." And now cocking his head to one side he put on his legal manner again, interrogating me as if I were a defendant hauled before him. "How many children did Adam and Eve have?"

I humored him. "Well, they had Cain and Abel and—"

"Stop right there. Cain and Abel's enough. Now Cain and Abel got into a fight, didn't they?"

"It was Cain's fight. He picked up a rock and slew his brother." And I chopped faster. He followed.

"So he did, and I believe it. Then what happened to Cain?"

"God put a curse on him, a mark on him and he fled."

"And where did he go?"

"The Bible says he went up into the land of Nod."

"Ah-hah, that's just what he did. Then what happened?"

"So you're coming to that crazy business of his finding his wife up there. Yes, I see what you're after!"

"That's just what I am," he spoke up triumphantly. And then his face deepened with the pious look I knew so well from the communion Sundays in Little Bethel Church when he officiated around the white tablecloth with the wine cups and the bits of damp clammy bread. Now he went on sanctimoniously, "Listen, fellow, you'd better be careful how you speak light about the Holy Scriptures. Crazy business? Well, I believe the Bible from led to led."

"Oh, yes, you say you do," I fumed. I was boiling.

"And I do. And the Bible do say in Genesis 4, verses 15, 16 and 17, that God set a mark on Cain, and Cain went up into the land of Nod—"

" 'And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden,' " I corrected sharply.

"Ahm, yes, that's right. And then what do it say?"

" 'And Cain knew his wife and she conceived and bare Enoch and he builded a city—' "

"Whoa. That's enough. Now who was his wife? They wasn't but one woman on earth at that time, was they — Eve, his own mother? No sir, no

other woman. Well, I'll tell you what's the truth — Cain cohabited up with one of these here female gorillas — you've seen 'em in the circus at Raleigh, seen what flat noses and big lips they got just like a nigger."

"Aw, go to the devil!" I yelled. And I hoed even more furiously. He still walked along by me.

"And that's the pime blank truth. Cain's children were animals. And they were niggers. And niggers are animals and they ain't got no souls. They were born of an animal, a gorilla. That's how the nigger race got started. And being the children of a gorilla, as I say, they ain't got no soul. You may not believe it, but most of the folks in this neighborhood believe it."

"Yes, they sure do," I sneered. "They use it for an excuse to oppress and keep the Negro people down. And the big politicians in Raleigh believe it and use it for the same reason. And let me tell you something, you folks that are always talking and mouthing about Jesus and the heavenly paradise hereafter where you're going to live in ease, play harps and hear the angels sing — well, let me tell you something, Arthur Searcy — you won't get within sight of heaven. You'll sure be caught short." And I let a neighing laugh break across the fields. "And Jesus has never heard of you and never will. You are all bedfellows and cronies of the Devil himself. When you die you'll hit hell-bottom like a shot — if there is a hell — and there ought to be for such folks as you." O, Lord, I was mad.

"Ho, ho," he jeered, "I hearn tell you're 'bout a plumb infidel behind all your Bible readings. You don't raily believe in the hereafter a-tall," he cackled sardonically.

"Well, maybe I do or I don't," I said. "Anyhow — this world is enough for me — for the present it is. But if there is a hereafter it is made for just such folks as you and it will be hell all right — hell to punish you." Here I angrily flung down my hoe. "And as for you and your lousy cotton, I'd never hoe another lick if it wasn't for my poor Cousin Lillian that you browbeat and use like a doormat to wipe your feet on."

And turning I went ragingly down across the little field to the spring branch to get me some water.

"Lordy mercy, he's madder'n a wet hen," he shrilled after me. I made no answer. And sitting by the spring I fashioned a little cup of some green oak leaves and drank my belly full of the sweet clear water.

Presently looking across the fields I saw Cousin Arth on his way to his little shack of a house there. I knew where he was headed now — over to town to visit the courthouse gang and spend his dollar. Sure enough, in a few minutes I saw him drive his little horse hitched to a roadcart from around behind the shack. Cousin Lillian came out on the corner-sagging decrepit porch and called to him. "Will you be back for supper, Arthur?" I heard her say in her meek way. And I also heard his gruff reply that he had legal business in town that might keep him late and for her to go ahead



and eat by herself.

And so he drove happily away. I knew what legal business it was — he sitting around the courthouse and chewing the rag and eating peanuts and bananas and coconut candy till his dollar was all gone, and listening too to the deadbeats talk and argue about the corruption of the Republican party. And then after that like as not they'd talk about the heathen practices of the lost souls in India and China who have never heard of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and so are doomed to eternal punishment — babies, young people, and old people. And all such stuff as that!

I got up stiffly and went on back to my work. And there coming across the rows, with her house duties done now, was Cousin Lillian to take her beloved husband's hoe and labor in his stead. I smothered the oath that rose to my lips.

And wish — wish — wish went our hoes again in the soft loamy earth as the day wore on. And the moist feel of the month of May was in the air around us.

"It's a mighty purty day, ain't it?" Cousin Lillian said. "You can smell the sweet bay blooms down in the swamp."

I was so swelled up with bitterness that I made no answer. And we chopped on.

Soon Cousin Lillian's clear voice rose in one of her beloved hymns, and soon too her strong chopping strokes fell into the rhythm of the piece. Now I am a sucker for music. That's about the only reason I went to church — to hear the music, well, yes, to teach the Bible class, too. So I joined in with her, and out across the burning fields our singing spread.

"Can we whose souls are lighted  
By wisdom from on high,  
Can we to men benighted  
The lamp of life deny."

And I made my tenor harmonize with her clear soprano, and satirically so — amen — though kind heart that she was she never noticed it.

"Salvation! O Salvation!  
The joyful sound proclaim,  
Till earth's remotest nation  
Has learned Messiah's name!"

And now I called out loudly, "Next verse! Let's make it ring, Cousin Lillian. Make it ring!"

She gave me a grateful happy smile — and we did, all about the heathen ones lost in darkness far away.

“In vain with lavish kindness  
The gifts of God are strown,  
The heathen in his blindness  
Bows down to wood and stone—  
Bows down to wood and stone.”

*land o' goshen!*

An exclamation.

*land poor*

Having little money but much land.

*land's sake!*

A colloquial exclamation.

It's a long *lane* that has no turning.

A *lantern* is no use to a mole.

*lantern-jawed*

One with a long thin face and prominent jaw.

*lap*

The top of a tree left on the ground after the log is removed.

*lap cloth*

Apron.

*lap link*

The flat open link of a chain which is used to join other links.

*lap of the gods*

Let fate or chance decide, take the responsibility. “It's in the lap of the gods.”

*lard stand*

A large tin can in which melted lard is poured. Then when it cools, it remains white as snow, much like uncolored oleomargarine.

*lareovers for meddlers*

A phrase of rebuking. There used to be an old saying that would come back at a person when he asked some meddlesome question — “Lareovers for meddlers and crutches for lame ducks.”

as *large* as life and twice as natural

as *large* as life and twice as sassy  
Rambunctious, buoyant, bold.

*lark*

A spree, a good time, a gay adventure.

When the sky falls, we shall all catch *larks*.

*lashings*

A great quantity, oodles. "He has lashings of money."

The *last* shall be first.

Many that are first shall be *last*.

The world will not *last* forever.

*last button on Gabe's coat*

The very last bit of anything.

*play one's last card*

To make a final try.

*the last day*

The day of judgment when, according to orthodox Christian belief, the end of the world will come to pass and the story of man will be completed. The dead will rise from the grave and be judged, and the evil ones will be separated from the good ones, the good ones to go to Heaven and rest in everlasting joy, and the bad ones to sink below somewhere in a burning Hell forevermore. The Muslims have the same.

*last go trade*

A compliment.

*lasting*

Elastic.

*lasting water*

Water that can stand without becoming stagnant.

*last legs*

Near the end, to be dying. "Old man Ben Gaskin, I hear, is on his last legs."

*on his last*

Same as last legs.

*the last of pea time and the first of squash*

An ill-luck time. "You look like you've been caught in the last of pea time and the first of squash."

*last roundup*

Judgment day.

*last straw*

The limit.

*latch onto*

To seize, to grab hold of. "He latched onto that nickel like a vice."

*latch string*

A string or cord hanging outside of a hole in a door and fastened to a latch on the inside for raising this latch to enter. Sometime at night the cord was drawn inside for safety's sake.

*latch string is out*

Hospitality, a warm welcome.

Big possums walk *late* at night.

He that riseth *late* must run all day.

better *late* than never

*lather*

To flatter, to praise unduly, to soft soap.

*lather her belly*

Sexual wallowing.

*latrine news*

Rumor in general, unreliable news, wild rumors.

*latter*

Litter. "That hen has laid her latter out."

*laudanum*

An opium-based home remedy for aches, especially toothaches.

*Laugh* and grow fat.

*Laugh* and the world *laughs* with you,  
Weep and you weep alone.  
(Proverb.)

*Don't make me laugh.*

Denial of belief.

*Laughing* is catching.

He who *laughs* last laughs best.

He *laughs* on the wrong side of his face.

The *laurels* all are cut.

Look to your *laurels*.

*lavender*

A special flower-bed plant, aromatic and supposed to have, like most plants, trees and flowers in the Valley, medicinal value. Oil or tea made from it was supposed to be a stimulant or tonic. Also it was good for headache and toothache.

Where *law* ends tyranny begins.

*the law*

A cop.

*to law*

To sue in the courts, to have a lawsuit. "He'll law you if you get him mad."

*John Lawson*

The earliest historian of North Carolina and the Valley country. The *Encyclopedia Americana* says of him: "He made his first voyage to the Carolinas in 1700 and stayed for several years, proving himself to be an intelligent and enterprising observer. He wrote one of the most valuable, candid, and readable of the early descriptions of the Carolinas and Indian life there. An expansion of his travel journal, it was first published in London in 1709 as *A New Voyage to Carolina* but became better known as *The History of Carolina*, its title in the second edition (1714). It was presumably while Lawson was in England in 1708 that he was appointed surveyor-general of North Carolina. He also met the Swiss promoter of colonization, Baron Christopher de Graffenried, with whom he supervised the immigration of some 600 Germans to the site later known as New Bern, N.C.

"In September 1711, not far from this settlement, both Lawson and Graffenried were seized by Tuscarora Indians, who had become increasingly hostile toward encroachment by the immigrants. Graffenried escaped or was released, but Lawson was put to death, probably by the methods of fire torture he had described in his book."

One's imagination doesn't dare dwell too closely and long on this daring man's final sufferings. He is firmly now a part of our nation's heritage and hope.

*lawsy me!*

A mild interjection.

*Lawyers* and woodpeckers have long bills.

*lay*

To have sexual intercourse, to sleep with. "He laid that girl the very first time he met her."

To bet, to wager. "I lay he won't be here at all."

*lay an egg*

To fail, to flunk out, to make a bad mistake.

*lay back*

To wait, to defer, to delay. "If the frost had laid back a while, you'd a-had a fine chance of beans."

*lay by*

To give crops a final plowing, to finish cultivating. "I'll lay by my crops when the rain stops."

*lay for*

To lie in wait, to ambushade.

*laying on of hands*

Method of faith healing. Usually the act is accompanied by vociferous and fervent prayings or shoutings but now, with television coming on, healing can take place over television three thousand miles away from the source of the healing hands and voice.

*to lay in the shade*

To get the best of, to outdo.

*lay into*

To fight, to thrash, to attack.

*lay it on thick*

To exaggerate.

*lay off*

To plan, to intend. "I lay off to fix them steps someday."

To stay away from, to shun. "Lay off that woman, fellow, she'll burn you."

*lay off rows*

To set up stakes across a flat plowed field and to plow straight furrows for rows.

*lay one's cards on the table*

To state the facts, to confess to the facts, tell the truth.

*lay out*

Intend, plan to. "I lay out to do that come a-Monday."

Also to scold, berate. "She really laid him out for his whore-hopping."

*lay out the corpse*

To prepare a dead person for the grave. More than once as a boy I heard my father say he had to "help lay out" a neighbor.

*lay up*

Plan to, intend. "I've laid up to do that many a time."

*layway*

To waylay.

*the laziest man*

In every neighborhood there is found a lazy man or one lazier than his fellows.

as *lazy* as a hog

as *lazy* as a hound

A *lazy* boy makes a smart man.

*Lazy Lawrence*

A personification of shimmering summer heat in the woods and fields.

"Better watch out in that fodder field or old Lazy Lawrence will get you."

See also "monkey riding."

There's more hope for a drinking man than a *lazy man*.

*a lazy man's load*

A trifling burden.

*Lazy Mary*

A dramatic game. Two young people get into the center of a ring, one representing the mother and the other the daughter Mary. The daughter Mary sits down on the ground or in a chair, or even lies down with her eyes closed. The mother comes up to her and, as the mother and the encircling ring sing, the little drama is acted out.

"Lazy Mary, will you get up?  
Will you get up, will you get up?  
Lazy Mary, will you get up?  
Will you get up today?"

Then the lazy daughter Mary sings back at her, asking, "What will you give me for my breakfast, if I get up today?" The mother answers, "Butter and bread." And Mary says she won't get up. And then she asks what she will have for dinner. And the mother says, "Peas and cornbread, and collards," or anything that she wishes to say, and Mary still says that she won't get up. Then she asks, "What will you give me for my supper?" And then the mother says she will give her a nice young man with rosy red cheeks, etc. Then Mary rises, singing gaily, "Yes, mother, I will get up."

*lazy Susan*

A round serving platter, usually of wood, and often attached on a pivot

to an informal dining table. The food is placed on it, and anyone who wishes to help himself simply turns the lazy Susan.

*Lead* us not into temptation.

A piece of *lead* worn on a string around the neck helps prevent toothache. Also effective in preventing nosebleed.

*lead by the nose*

Dominate, same as “henpeck.”

*leader*

A sinew, a tendon. “Yes, he got hung in the barb wire and cut a leader that made him limp, but it don’t hurt him as a plough mule a bit.”

*lead home*

To lead a partner to the starting place in a folk dance.

*leading question*

An unfair question, a question meant to trap the one who answers.

*leading strings*

Control.

*lead in one’s britches*

To be lazy, to move slowly.

*lead me to it*

Anticipated pleasure.

*to die of lead poisoning*

To be fatally shot.

*lead with your chin*

To push innocently into a harmful situation, to ignorantly invite one’s own hurt.

We all fade as the *leaf*.

*turn over a new leaf*

Make a new resolve, a new beginning.

take a *leaf* out of one’s book

To learn a lesson from, take a hint from.

*leak*

Take a leak, to urinate.

A little *leak* will sink a great ship.



*spring a leak*

To urinate.

*leaks* like a sieve

He ate the *lean* and left the fat  
And that has put him where he's at.

*lean* as a rake

a *lean* horse for a long race

You must take the fat with the *lean*.

*“Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”*

A popular evangelical hymn in every Valley church, excepting the Catholic and Episcopalian. It brought comfort to many a heart aching for a perished loved one. It was a good parlor-courting song, too. The quiet substitution of “your ever-loving” for “the everlasting” was easy to do.

“What a fellowship, what a joy divine—  
Leaning on the everlasting arms!  
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

“Leaning, leaning,  
Safe and secure from all alarms,  
Leaning, leaning,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.”

*a leap*

The copulation by a male animal. In the early Valley newspapers there are many advertisements about a stallion which would service at, say, “\$5.00 a leap.”

It is a *leap* in the dark.

Better to *leap* before you look than always to look and never *leap*.

*Leapfrog*

An ancient and still popular boys' athletic game. It was known in England as early as 1300, and some authorities say it was popular in the Middle Ages. One boy bends far over, his head hung down. A second runs forward, puts his hands on the first boy's back and propels himself over him as far as he can. He marks the place on the ground where his heels strike, plants himself there bent over, then the first bent one straightens up and makes his leap, and so on. The winning player is one who sets his heel mark at such a distance that the others when they leap cannot equal it.

*Leap Year*

A year which comes around every fourth year with one extra day added, making 366. The significance in folklore of this year is that during it girls are supposed to be able to propose marriage to any of their recalcitrant loves without embarrassment.

*learn*

To teach. "Mr. Parham learnt me a lot."

*Learn* to crawl before you walk.

*Learn* to creep before you run.

*Learn* to labor and to live.

*Learn* to walk before you run.

One is never too old to *learn*.

*learn the ropes*

To get acquainted with a situation or a job.

*least (leastest)*

The youngest. "John there is the least one."

*Least* said is soonest mended.

The *least* said the better.

From the *least* to the greatest.

*leather*

To thrash, to whip.

*whit leather*

A tough gristle of an ox's neck where the yoke has worn a roll of almost calloused leather. An old comparison often used, "as tough as whit leather."

*to leave cold*

Not to affect one, to make no impression.

*leave in the lurch*

To desert one, to leave someone caught in an unhappy situation.

A little *leaven* leaveneth the whole lot.

*leave out in the cold*

To count out, to ignore, to disregard.

*leavings*

The trash, the scraps.

*lebben*

Eleven.

*led*

Lid.

*led to led*

Cover to cover, completely. "He knows the Bible from led to led."

*leetle*

Little.

*left field*

In an ignorant or awkward situation.

Don't let your *left hand* know what your right does.

*left-handed*

Awkward, hypocritical, careless. "In passing he paid him a left-handed compliment."

*left-handed monkey wrench*

See "April fool."

A *left-handed* person owes the devil a day's work.

*left hanging on the vine*

Unmarried, old maid.

*left high and dry*

Left behind, deserted, tricked.

*left holding the bag*

To be made a fool of, to be tricked, gulled.

There used to be a practice in the Valley — maybe elsewhere — of getting a newcomer or one not in the know to go on what we called a snipe hunt. The one to be tricked was given a tow sack and told to "stand here in this ditch and keep your sack mouth lowered and opened and we will drive some snipes along the ditch, and you can catch plenty of them — and take it from me, snipe eating is the best there is — partridges ain't in it."

So we would get our innocent one stationed in the dark ditch, then steal away with our lighted torch and go home. Our friend would wait and wait, and ultimately it would dawn on him that he had been left holding the bag.

It was up to him to find his way home in the dark night, feeling his way through brambles and briars no doubt. From then on he usually was keen as could be in getting others to be left holding the bag.

*left on the shelf*

Ignored, passed over, discarded.

*left sucking the hind tit*

Given the worst of the deal.

like cutting from the *leg* to add to the arm

*legal protection for men*

In 1770 the English Parliament passed the following law: "That all women of whatever age, rank, profession or degree, who shall, after this act, impose upon, or seduce and betray into matrimony any of His Majesty's male subjects, by virtue of scents, paints, cosmetic washes, artificial teeth, false hair, Spanish wool, iron stays, bolstered hips or high-heeled shoes, shall incur the penalty of the law now in force against witchcraft and like misdemeanors; and the marriage under such circumstances shall be null and void."

This law, of course, was promulgated through all the colonies. If it had any effect in the Valley as to women's coquetry (all to man's delight), I haven't heard of it. There was not and never has been a like law to protect women from men. Maybe, with ERA coming on, in time there will be.

*to leg for*

To pull for, advocate, to promote.

*leg it*

To walk.

*break a leg*

To get seduced, to become pregnant.

In theatrical terms, a wish for success on stage.

*pull one's leg*

To fool, to tease.

*shake a leg*

To hurry, to move fast.

*not a leg to stand on*

Without any support or logical reason for one's action.

*leg up*

To help one mount a horse.

An advantage.

*lemme*

Let me.

*lemon*

A sourpuss, a failure, a flop, a distasteful person.

Gnawing a *lemon* is good for a cold.

*lemon balm*

A favorite aromatic plant, also known as bee balm, sweet balm and sweet Mary. It grows from Maine to Florida. A tea from it was supposed to be good for fevers, also as an aid in women's menstruation.

*lend a hand*

Help.

*Lend* me your ears.

Neither *lender* nor borrower be.

You never know the *length* of a snake until he's dead.

A *leopard* cannot change his spots.

*le's*

Let us.

*lessen*

Unless. "That fellow never will get well of that cough lessen he quits smoking so many cigarettes."

*Let* bygones be bygones.

*Let* me put a bug in your ear.

*Let* the cobbler stick to his last.

*Let* the geese beware when the fox preaches.

*Let* the horns go with the hide.

*Let* us have peace.

*Let* us pray.

*let alone*

Much less. "I haven't even had expense money, let alone a fee."

*let daylight into*

To make a hole through, to shoot, to kill.

*let down*

To fail. "He let me down in the trade we made."

*let down the bars*

To forego the rules, to take off restraints. "The University at Chapel Hill has let down the bars all right. You just oughta see what happens at one of these spring dances."

*let George do it*

To pass the buck, have someone else take the responsibility, evade one's duty.

*let go*

To fire a gun. "When that mad dog got within twenty feet of me, I let go with both barrels at him and I reckon that stopped him."

*let it slide*

Take no notice, let it pass.

*let off steam*

To blow one's top, give expression to one's emotion, to tear loose.

*let on*

To pretend. "I let on I didn't know a thing about who stole Mr. Hugh's soybeans."

*let out*

To dismiss, recess. "School lets out at four o'clock every day."

*the letters "O" and "X"*

"O" below a stamp on a letter means a hug, "X" means a kiss.

*let the cat out of the bag*

Disclose a secret, spill confidential news.

*let the old cat die*

To let a swing gradually grow still.

*let up*

To cease, to stop. "The rain is letting up now and we can all get back to plowing again."

*Let us then be up and doing*

With a heart for any fate,  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.

*lettuce*

Money. Same as kale or long green.

*level*

An area of concern or activity. "I don't know what's happening on your local level here, but as for the national level things are in a bad way."

To be honest, straightforward, to act honestly. "He leveled with me on the matter and so we got it cleared up."

*level best*

The best of one's ability.

*'leven*

Eleven.

*liable to*

Likely to, prone to. "I'm liable to haul off and knock you winding if you don't shut your big mouth."

A *liar* is not to be believed even when he speaks the truth.

*liars' contest*

See "school-breaking."

Give me *liberty* or give me death.

A dry crust with *liberty* is better than a king's luxury with chains.

*Liberty Boys*

A group of young Cumberland County men who in an Association signed on June 20, 1775, more than a year ahead of Jefferson's declaration, their own declaration of independence from Great Britain, swearing that "we will go forth and be ready to sacrifice our lives and fortune" for freedom and safety. There is a heavy stone monument at what is now known as "Liberty Point" in Fayetteville, commemorating their action. Of the thirty-nine names on the monument not a Mac is among them. The older Scots around what was then known as Cross Creek had taken the blood oath for the king and felt bound by it. See "blood oath."

*liberty hall*

A free and easy home.

*libido*

The instinctive sexual energy or desire which attaches itself to the ego or to external objects or persons, this according to the Freudian mythology.

*lick*

A blow. "It takes a lot of licks to drive a nail in the dark."

To whip, to outdo. "Old Zack Broadhuss could lick any man in the county."

Any, a bit. "He didn't do a lick of work the whole morning."

*lick and a promise*

A hasty action, as a hurried bathing, a slubberly or slovenly act. "He just

gives his bed a lick and a promise.”

*lick log*

A log with hollows cut in it in which salt was put for cows to lick.

*lick one's chops*

To be smugly happy, to feel superior.

*flip one's lid*

To go nuts, to become hysterical.

*blow the lid off*

To give vent to one's emotions and high feelings. Same as kick the lid off.

*keep the lid on*

To keep in control of things, to be self-restrained.

*lids*

Book covers or binding. “If it ain't between the lids of the Bible, then it ain't nowhere.”

*lie down*

To give in, to take a beating without resistance.

*a lie laid on with a trowel*

A thick and egregious lie.

*a lie made of whole cloth*

A statement that sounds exactly like the truth.

*lie out*

To let land lie fallow. “I'm letting that piece lie out for tobacco next year.”

*Life* is ever lord of death and love can never lose its own.

*Life* is short and time is fleeting

And the grave is not the goal.

*Life* is short, yet sweet.

All that a man hath will he give for his *life*.

He that loses his *life* for my sake shall find it.

It's a great *life* if you don't weaken.

The biggest thing in *life* is a funeral at the end of it.

Man's *life* is like a tale that is soon told, full of sound and fury and signifying nothing.

We are such stuff as dreams are made on and our little *life* is rounded with a sleep.



The greatest business in *life* is to prepare for death.

He that findeth his *life* shall lose it.

If you love *life*, then don't squander time, for time is what *life* is made of.

While there's *life* there's hope.

If *life* were only a dream, it would still be worth dreaming.

Take no thought for your *life*, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink.

*life everlasting (feather weed, fussy gussy)*

Rabbit tobacco, cudweed. A native annual that grows from one to three feet tall. It has numerous white flowers and is slightly aromatic. It flourishes along roadsides, hedges and in deserted fields. We boys used to get the dried little autumn leaves and roll them into "cigarettes." We would puff away, feeling grown-up and important. And now and then we'd flick away an invisible ash with a delicate and dandyish finger. The dried leaves made good chewing tobacco, too, and often we'd get a cheek full, roll it about with our tongue, simulating one of our favorite big league baseball pitchers and spit profusely and joyously about us.

*life insurance agent*

One of the tribe of predators who used to roam the Valley seeking unwary victims. Of late years they work more from their desks in their offices in the villages or from larger offices in the cities, say, as in Greensboro where one of the most powerful of these klaverns is located, but their methods remain the same. I still sweat when I think of the unlucky time I first got into the clutches of one of these pirates.

*for the life of me (him)*

A phrase for emphasis.

*life of Reilly*

An easy life, to be living in ease, no more to do.

*not on your life*

Absolutely not.

*This is the life.*

A happy situation, things all hunky-dory.

*you bet your life*

A phrase of emphasis.

*lift*

To exhilarate.

*lift one's leg*

To piss.

*light*

A window pane. "That nasty, stinking Matthews boy knocked four lights out of my window with his beanshooter."

The dawn. "I get up before light every morning, summer or winter."

Daybreak.

Disrespectful. "It won't do to speak light of the Holy Scriptures."

*light* as a feather

*light* as air

*light* as chaff

*light* as cork

*light* as day

*light* as snow

The *light* of the body is the eye.

The *light* shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not.

The man with time to burn never gave the world any *light*.

Walk while ye have *light* lest the darkness come upon you.

Ye are the *light* of the world.

Show thy servant the *light* of thy countenance.

Let your *light* so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

the true *light* which lighteth every man that cometh into the world

*light a shuck (a rag)*

To go fast, to run, to flee. "When that cannon went off, he lit a shuck going away from there."

*lighted match*

Hold a lighted match vertical until it burns itself out. The charred remainder will fall in the direction of the one you love. The same is true of an expiring candlewick.

*light-heeled*

Said of a girl who is especially frolicsome and a bit amorous, too.

*light in*

To begin, to start. "You fellows light in and eat."

*Lightning* is caused by God winking his eye.

*Lightning* never strikes twice in the same place.

*lightning in the North*

A sign of rain on its way.

During a drought time in summer my father would most often sit on our back porch and watch anxiously for any sign of lightning. And most often too some of us children who shared his worry about the rain-starving crops would be there with him watching. When no wink of lightning appeared anywhere till bedtime, he and we would give up for that night. But when we did see a wink of lightning in the North, he would speak up and always say with some jubilancy, "That means rain in forty-eight hours."

*lightning tree*

A tree that is struck by lightning has a special kind of luck or ill luck attached to it. It is bad luck to cut firewood from such a tree. Toothpicks made from its splinters are good for toothache.

*white lightning*

Fresh-run corn liquor.

*light out*

To run off suddenly, to take off in a hurry. "One more word from you and I'll light out for the sheriff."

A *light purse* makes a heavy heart.

*put out one's light*

To kill.

*lights*

The lungs, usually has reference to hogs or cattle.

*knock your lights out*

To kill.

*lightwood knots*

The knots from the dead limbs of the longleaf pine tops were especially full of rosin and, when chopped into bits and pieces, made wonderful material for starting fires and keeping them going under green oak wood in the fireplace.

*lightwood splinters*

These fat splinters from the longleaf pine, full of rosin (or turpentine), were

good for starting fires under green oak wood and for traveling the dark roads in the black night. We used them often in place of lanterns in serenading, bird-blindings, and 'possum and coon hunts.

*like* a cat on a hot griddle

*like* a fly in hot manure

*like a house afire*

Furiously, with intense effort. "He pulls fodder like a house afire."

*like a man's titties and the Pope's balls*

Useless.

*like as not*

Likely, perhaps.

*like* as two peas in a pod

*like* as two pins

*like* a ton of bricks

*like* carpenter, *like* chips

*like crazy*

Furiously. "The Russians were trying like crazy to capture the market in transport jets."

*like falling off a log*

Easy, with no effort.

*like* father, *like* son

*like fun*

Doubtful.

*like hotcakes*

Quickly. "Dr. Nanzetti's salve for the itch sold like hot cakes."

*like it but it doesn't like me*

Said of a food that upsets one or something that doesn't agree with one.

*Like it or lump it.*

*like* knows *like*

*like* master, *like* man

*like* mother, *like* daughter

*like* nothing on earth

*like* the very devil

*liked to run himself to death*

In reference to someone who was exceedingly busy.

*likely*

Handsome. Also apt to.

*like pulling eyeteeth*

A difficult task, a hard job. "Getting money out of old John Allen is like pulling eyeteeth."

Then there was the business of Roger Bethune and Corliss Neal. They got into a fight one day in Fayetteville and Corliss broke out one of Roger's eyeteeth, root and all. Being a blacksmith and a toothpuller too, Corliss made Roger a new tooth out of a piece of hickory wood, then drove it in and said, "Now, Roger, you're fixed good as new." They both were drunk at the time, and of course Corliss was as addled as Roger was.

Next day when Roger sobered up, his new eyetooth gave him a fit. The dampness in his mouth had caused it to swell, and soon the side of his face was puffed out as if he'd been stung by a swarm of hornets. He was a looking sight, as they say in the Valley. His wife hurried him fast to town and Doctor Bain, the dentist, nearly tore off his jaw getting that new eyetooth separated from him. Corliss had certainly done a good job.

When the doctor let Roger loose he went straight to the hardware store, bought himself a pistol and went looking for Corliss. But some of their friends stopped him and persuaded him to give up the gun. From that day till he died he and Corliss had no dealings with each other, though before that they had been buddies and loved to get drunk together.

*the likes of*

A comparison, also for emphasis. "He don't care for the likes of me."

*like something the cat brought in*

A person of no worth, a bedraggled person or thing.

*like to*

Almost. "When Len Bradley jumped on me with both fists, he like to kill me."

Consider the *lilies* of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin.

*Alexander Lillington*

A Revolutionary War leader in the Valley. He was prominent in the Battle of Moore's Creek and, though Richard Caswell was in charge of the Whig troops, the Champions of Lillington recited their well-known couplet, saying—

“Moore’s Creek field, the bloody story,  
Where Lillington fought for Caswell’s glory.”

His home, Lillington Hall, which was near Wilmington, like nearly all of the old Valley homes, has long ago disappeared. There still stands in what was once his front yard the largest magnolia tree I ever saw, a living witness to his perished hand.

My hometown Lillington was named for him.

*Lilliput*

The home of the Allen family and one of the finest of all the old houses in the Valley. It stood near Orton, another and still extant mansion of pre-Revolutionary times. Only a few broken dishes and bits of brick here and there on the overgrown site remain from Lilliput’s glory.

*lily-livered*

Cowardly, weak.

*limb*

To trim. “He limbed the tree with his power saw.”

In the old days it used to designate a woman’s leg, because it was bad taste to call it by its real name.

*limber* as a dishrag

*limber* as a rag

*limber* as the Pope’s dick

*limber-dick*

A will-less, no-good person, a weak member, a sexually weak man.

*limberjack*

A toy, usually homemade in the old days, the arms and legs made to bob by pulling an attached string.

*limber-jawed*

Same as wamper-jawed, a sort of crank-sided jaw.

*limb of Satan*

A cantankerous child.

*lime*

A disinfectant, spread around privies.

*that’s the limit*

The last straw, the final outdoing.

*sky is the limit*

Without limit, no restraint, no holds barred.

*limp as a rag**linchpin*

A pin used to put through the end of an axle to keep the wheel on. Also the main pin, the key man or action.

*Colin Lindsay*

An early pastor at old Barbecue Church and, according to tradition, a good one. People were attracted to him not only because of his preaching but because of the almost miraculous return of his mother from the grave to give birth to him. According to the Valley historian, Malcolm Fowler, Mrs. Lindsay, Colin's mother, was stricken with a mysterious illness and died. She was certified as dead, the wake was held, and her body was buried in the family cemetery. That night after the burial some ghoulish grave robbers dug her up and opened the coffin to get a valuable ring they knew she was buried with. They couldn't remove the ring and so decided to cut her finger off. At the first whack of the knife, Mrs. Lindsay's body gave a jerk and she screamed. According to Fowler, the robbers "created another road through the undergrowth" going away from there.

Sometime after this Colin was born and, in praise and thankfulness, was dedicated to God.

*line*

Stock of merchandise. "The Adkins boys have got a good line of men's shirts on sale."

*draw the line*

To set up a limit.

*in line*

Conformity, do as others do.

*linen rain*

Lonnie Cofield says he calls a certain kind of windy rain by this name because it comes down in sheets.

*get a line on*

To get the facts or information about a person or subject.

*line out*

The reading out of verses of the hymn by the pastor or song leader which are to be sung then by all the congregation. In Pleasant Union Church as a little boy I used to sit in wonderful amazement watching Mr. Tom Long lining out the hymn, "On Jordan's stormy banks I stand and cast a wishful

eye,” and then the sonorous response in the old cold church.

*l'ines*

Loins. “My prize hog is so fat she’s down in her l’ines.”

*hard lines*

Hard ways, hard things to do.

*line tree*

A tree growing on the boundaries of land, and marked by the surveyors. It’s illegal for either party to cut it without the permission of the other.

*line your insides*

To eat heartily.

*link sausage*

The old timey method of stuffing hog chitterlings and then linking them together and hanging them up to dry. Link sausage and sweet potatoes used to be the best eating a Valley boy ever had. And how eagerly I’d open my tin bucket at school and get out a piece of cold link sausage and a well-cooked potato and go to it. I still love link sausage and sweet potatoes better than most any food ever created.

*Linkumsloos*

A fabulous creature that is supposed to live in the deep swamps of the Valley.

*lint dodger*

A cotton mill worker.

*linthead*

A cotton mill worker. I can remember as a boy going with my father to Dunn and passing the little town of Duke, and if it happened to be the noon hour and the little boys were outside, I always thought of them as lintheads. The farm people looked down on the cotton mill workers. Even the tenant farmers felt superior to them.

Beard the *lion* in his den.

*lion*

A popular and much admired person, a hero.

I am reminded here of one of the many Hollywood lions, Clark Gable. He was a lion if there ever was one. How he kept his common sense under so much adulation, I don’t know. I once worked with him and Victor Fleming (director of “Gone With the Wind”) for a while on a picture, later starring Gable and Greer Garson (“Gable’s back and Garson’s got him”), and found him a most common sense and likeable person. I got more fun from his hunting stories than he and Fleming got help from me on his picture script.

One day on the MGM lot a group of visitors were being shown around.



Gable suddenly emerged from his dressing room or from somewhere. The ladies in the group were electrified at seeing him. One of the main dowagers pointed a trembling finger at him, stuttering in an overflow of excitement, "There — there — he — he is!" and fainted dead away.

Also there is a large Valley bug known as a lion. It is supposed to be a ferocious anteater.

*put one's head in the lion's mouth*

To do a foolish, daredevil act, for instance, Russian roulette.

*button up one's lip*

To be silent or discreet.

Keep a stiff upper *lip*.

Keep your *lip* out of other people's business.

*"Lips That Touch Liquor Shall Never Touch Mine"*

One of the many temperance songs heard in the Valley and elsewhere in the late years of the 19th and the early years of the 20th century. I first heard it, partly recited and partly sung, by a Valley girl when I was a boy. She was being courted by a farmer who had taken to drink, and as she recited I wondered how she could let this swain's lips touch hers anyway, liquor or not, for he was fearsomely ugly and had a droopy tobacco-stained moustache.

"When your lips on mine imprinted farewell,  
They had never been soiled by the beverage of hell,  
But they come to me now with that terrible sign  
And the lips that touch liquor shall never touch mine."

Good for her! But she later married him anyway.

Good *liquor* needs no water.

*liquorhead*

An alcoholic.

*liquor up*

To drink heavily, to get fired up with liquor.

*Listeners* hear no good of themselves.

*"Listen to the Mockingbird"*

In my youth this was not only a popular song for singing but a tune for good fiddling. I first heard it from an itinerant fiddler and he used to be a marvel to us all when, with a sort of water whistle in his mouth, he imitated the bright notes of the mockingbird on the chorus, as he fiddled away. I learned to play it but badly on my Sears-Roebuck fiddle, but I never tried a whistle.

“I’m dreaming now of Hallie,  
    Sweet Hallie, sweet Hallie.  
I’m dreaming now of Hallie  
For the thought of her  
    Is one that never dies.  
She’s sleeping in the valley,  
    The valley, the valley,  
She’s sleeping in the valley  
And the mockingbird is singing  
    Where she lies.”

Chorus

“Listen to the mockingbird,  
Listen to the mockingbird,  
The mockingbird is singing  
O’er her grave —  
Listen to the mockingbird,  
Listen to the mockingbird  
Still singing where the weeping  
    willows wave.

“When the charms of spring awaken,  
    Awaken, awaken,  
When the charms of spring awaken,  
And the mockingbird is singing on the bough,  
I feel like one forsaken,  
    Forsaken, forsaken.  
I feel like one forsaken  
Since my Hallie is no longer with me now.”

Repeat chorus.

*lit*

Drunk. “Man, was I lit, and that’s why the cops got me.”

*Little* boats should stay near the shore.

*little* but loud

A *little* each day is much in a year.

*Little* knocks make great blocks.

A *little* knowledge is a dangerous thing.

A *little* of everything is nothing in the main.

*Little* pitchers have big ears.

A *little* pot is soon hot.

*Little* strokes fell great oaks.

Give a *little* and take a *little*.

Every *little* bit helps.

A *little bird told me*.

Gossip or news from an unnamed or indefinite source.

*little bit*

A tiny bit, a very small amount.

In a small way, in a picayunish manner. "He bores with a little bit and he stays small, and Henry Spears bores with a big bit and he grows rich."

*every little bit*

Ever and anon, now and then. "Every little bit old Zeke Matthews would holler out behind the bars, 'Come and get me, white folks, get me out of this torment.' "

*Little Bo Peep* has lost her sheep

And can't tell where to find them.

Leave them alone and they'll come home

Bringing their tails behind them.

Little Bo Peep fell fast asleep

And dreamt she heard them bleating.

But when she awoke she found it a joke

For they were still all fleeting.

(Nursery song.)

*Little boy, little boy*, who made your britches?

Ma cut 'em out and Pa sewed the stitches.

Little boy, little boy, where'd you get your knowledge?

Some I got at free school and some I got at college.

(A teasing rhyme.)

When I was a *little boy*

I lived by myself,

And all the bread and cheese I got

I put it on the shelf.

The rats and the mice  
They stirred such a strife  
I had to go to London  
To get me a wife.  
  
The streets were so wide  
And the lanes were so narrow  
I had to bring her home  
In an old wheelbarrow.  
  
The wheelbarrow it broke  
And give my wife a fall.  
The devil can take 'em  
Wheelbarrow, wife and all.  
(Nursery narrative rhyme.)

*Little boy blue*, come blow your horn,  
The sheep's in the meadow and the cow's  
in the corn.  
Where's the little boy that looks after  
the sheep?  
He's under the haystack fast asleep.  
(Nursery rhyme.)

*“Little Brown Jug”*

A drinking song we often used as a lively work song in the fields.

“Me and my wife lived all alone  
In a little log hut we called our own.  
She loved liquor and I loved rum.  
Twixt 'em both we had much fun.  
  
“Ha ha ha, you and me,  
Little brown jug, how I love thee!  
Ha ha ha, you and me,  
Little brown jug, how I love thee!

“Me and my wife had a bobtailed dog  
Crossed the creek on a rotten log.  
The log it broke and we fell in,  
But I saved my jug of gin.  
  
“Ha ha ha, you and me,  
Little brown jug, how I love thee!  
Ha ha ha, you and me,  
Little brown jug, how I love thee!

“If I had a cow that gave such milk,  
 I'd dress her in the finest silk.  
 I'd feed her on the finest hay  
 And milk her forty times a day.

“Ha ha ha, you and me,  
 Little brown jug, how I love thee!  
 Ha ha ha, you and me,  
 Little brown jug, how I love thee!”

*Little David* took a rock no bigger than a button  
 Killed old Goliath dead same as any mutton.  
 (A recitation rhyme.)

*Little drops* of water, little grains of sand  
 Make the mighty ocean and the present land.  
 (Proverb rhyme.)

### *little end of the horn*

A disadvantageous position.

*Little head*, big wit.  
 Big head, not a bit.

### *little house*

A *little house* well-filled, a little land well-tilled and a wife well-willed are great riches.

### *Little Jack Horner*

Sat in a corner  
 Eating his Christmas pie.  
 He stuck in his thumb  
 And pulled out a plum,  
 And said, “What a smart boy am I!”  
 (Nursery rhyme.)

### *little man*

The deputy warden in a penitentiary.

A finger rhyme said to the baby as one touches the fingers of the little one, starting with the smallest finger.

Little man  
 Ring man  
 Long man  
 Lick pot  
 Thumbbo.

*Little Miss Muffet*

Sat on a tuffet  
Eating her curds and whey.  
Along came a spider  
And sat down beside her  
And frightened Miss Muffet away.  
(Nursery rhyme.)

*Little Nancy Etticoat*

In a white petticoat  
And a red nose.  
She has no feet nor hands,  
And the longer she stands  
The shorter she grows.  
(Riddle. A candle.)

This *little pig* went to market,  
This little pig stayed at home,  
This little pig got roast beef,  
And this little pig got none,  
And this little pig said,  
'Wee, wee, wee' all the way home. (or 'Wee, wee, wee, I want some.')

(A nursery rhyme often recited in playing with a baby and tickling his toes, beginning with the big toe.)

*little pigs*

Heartleaf, wild ginger, the early leaves resembling small pigs' ears.

*Little Polly Flinders*

Sat among the cinders  
Warming her purty little toes.  
Her mother came and caught her  
And spanked her little daughter  
For ruining her nice new clothes.  
(Nursery rhyme.)

*littler (littlest)*

The younger one, the youngest.

*Little River Academy*

One of the many academies which dotted the Valley through much of the 19th century and on into the early part of the 20th. Many of them closed during the Civil War, never to reopen. Little River was near the present town

of Linden and of high reputation. Most of its faculty members were college and university graduates. Like nearly all the early academies, it was coeducational.

*Little* Robin Redbreast  
 Sat upon a rail.  
 Nibble nabble went his head,  
 Wiggle waggle went his tail.  
 (A recitation rhyme.)

*Little* ships stay near the shore,  
 Bigger ships can venture more.

A *little spark* may kindle a great fire.

*little'un*  
 A small child, a little one.

*Live* and learn.

*Live* and let live.

*live* like a king

*Live* to learn and learn to live.

If a man die shall he *live* again.

through whom we *live* and move and have our being

The longer we *live* the more we learn.

*live at home*  
 Be independent from one's garden.

*live dictionary*  
 A talkative woman.

A *live dog* is better than a dead lion.

*lively*  
 Immoral, full of sexual high spirits.

as *lively* as a cricket

as *lively* as a kitten

*live on the hump*  
 Use up one's savings or capital, use stored up supplies.

*liver lips*  
 Thick lips.

*liver spots*

The yellow or brownish spots that appear on older people's hands. "They have nothing to do with the liver," says Dr. Fields.

*liverwort*

See "hepatica."

No man *lives* to himself.

*Lives* of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime  
And departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time.

As a man *lives* so shall he die.  
As a tree falls so shall it lie.

*livestock*

Head lice or fleas. "That boy's got a lot of livestock."

*live with it*

To endure, to accept as one's lot.

The *living* may hate death but the dead are satisfied.

*by the living God!*

An exclamation.

*living in sin*

A man and woman living together as man and wife without being married.

Ned Lambert and Agatha Tyson lived like this for several years and, though it all happened quite a while ago, I still hear it talked about now and then in the Valley.

The two were sweethearts from childhood. And by the time Agatha was seventeen and Ned was nineteen everybody expected to hear any day that they were to be married. Sunday after Sunday Ned would walk with Agatha to the nearby Ebenezer Church or in bad weather drive her in his daddy's buggy. He never showed any interest in any other girl nor she in any other boy.

Time passed. They both finished high school, and Ned got a job clerking in the village dry goods store. Agatha stayed at home looking after her now invalid mother. Of the two sweethearts, Agatha was, as everybody knew, the more persistent. Finally an announcement came out in the weekly paper to the effect that Mrs. Joel Tyson announced the coming marriage of her daughter Agatha Watson Tyson to Mr. Ned Ransom Lambert, the local rising young businessman, on such and such a date. By this time Agatha



was twenty-four and Ned twenty-six. Now preparations and hurry-scurry of bridesmaids, flowers, and the usual to-do were at work.

But alas, at the church they waited and waited. No Ned. They found him in his boarding house drunk. Heartsick disappointment all around and none grieved more or wept so loud as Ned's little sister Cheryl, the main bridesmaid, for she adored her brother. Perhaps Agatha's hurt pride prevented her from showing outward too much of the inner agony of the hurt.

As for Ned, he moved to another job in another distant town.

More time passed. Agatha's parents died and she remained alone in the big house with an old Negro woman and her pet cat. Finally Ned, now nearing middle age and chastened and sobered, returned home. His former employers relented and gave him back his job, for, as everybody said, Ned was a likeable fellow. Pretty soon it was noised around that Ned and Agatha were seeing each other again. No doubt she was the one that made the first advance, and this time it was clear she intended by hook or crook to get Ned to the altar.

When the two were seen at church service together, not once but several times, it was assumed that they had made up.

In time Agatha sent out a few invitations to their wedding. Cheryl, who had married and moved away, came along with her little daughter Lucy to be bridesmaid. They assembled at the church and Agatha had engaged her old Negro gardener to stay with "Mr. Ned and be sure he is rightly dressed and on time." The wedding party waited for about half an hour and it seemed the bridegroom was to repeat his absence. Then the door opened and Ned in tuxedo appeared. He came staggering down the aisle, followed by a pleading and half-weeping old Negro man calling out, "No, Mr. Ned, nossuh — you can't do that!" But Ned could and he did. He was a frightful sight, for hugged up against his white shirt was a huge piece of raw, bloody beef. Agatha screamed as Ned staggered up to her, drunk as a coot, and dumped the meat into her arms. Then he bowed about him and said, "Excuse me," and left.

This time there really was a scandal in the village. But Ned didn't remain to feel the scorn of his neighbors. He left again. He was next heard of in South America.

More years passed. Agatha became a recluse and, where she had had one cat, now she had a swarm of them, each with its own special character and name. Agatha in her loneliness read a lot and she found the names of literary or historical characters intriguing — Alexander, Romeo, Delilah, Juliet, and so on. These she gave to her cats.

More time passed. Then lo and behold, one day Ned, a bent gray-headed man, appeared at the village grocery store with a market basket. When and how he had come back no one knew. He made his purchases and returned to Agatha's house. From then on the two lived there together "in sin."

Agatha made it known that when he had come home this time, old and penniless, she had given him shelter. But he still refused marriage, she said, and what of it? It was now too late anyway. They were both too old for that, she said. So—as Lonnie Cofield said — “Let ’em alone. They can’t do no damage nohow.” So the neighbors did, with the exception of gossiping about them.

One day Lucy Lambert, the niece, Ned’s last living relative—Lucy Atkins she was now and a widow — received a telegram from Agatha which said, “Ned is lying dead on my kitchen floor. Come and get him.”

Lucy and her daughter Sadie set out in their old Buick car to go look into the matter. It was the time of the great depression and Lucy was hard up. There was no money for railroad fare and so she traveled by car, bad tires and all.

When they arrived at Agatha’s house, they were met by the old gray-haired lady dressed not in black but in her ancient and yellowed wedding dress, and all the cats wore black bow mourning ties around their necks.

To make a long story short, Lucy and Sadie were ordered to get Ned out and buried somewhere. They had no credit and decided to get him back to their hometown and have him put cheaply and decently away in the local churchyard. When night came on, they backed the Buick car up to Agatha’s kitchen, got Ned into it on the back seat somehow, covered the body with a blanket and set out.

Sitting by the fire in our living room one night, Lucy told me of that nightmarish drive. “At any minute,” she said, “I expected one of the old tires would blow out. Once we had to stop for gas and a cop came up and looked into the car. ‘What you got there?’ he inquired. And Sadie spoke right up — she was always quick on the trigger — and said, ‘A lot of old clothes we’re taking home for the Salvation Army.’ ‘Well,’ he said as he looked at our old car, ‘I hope you get there with them.’ And we did finally.

“We got a cheap coffin and had a decent funeral for Ned. We had a telegram of sympathy which Agatha sent, saying ‘for Ned Lambert — gone but not forgotten.’ It was not signed by her, but by all the cats — Julius Caesar, Mark Anthony, Romeo, Juliet, Cleopatra, Socrates, Aristotle, Abe Lincoln, Queen of Sheba, Mary Magdalene, and Homer.”

*whale the living lard out of one*

To beat unmercifully.

*living pie*

Dung. “He jumped out from behind a tree and scared the living pie out of me.”

*a living shame!*

A very great shame indeed.

*lizard*

A protected little reptile.

As a boy I was taught that if you killed a lizard, its mate would come at night and count your teeth while you slept, and if that happened, you were — as Lonnie Cofield put it — “in a bad row of stumps.” The same belief was pretty common as to the black snake. Jim Faulkner, who used to work on our farm and was an intriguing storyteller to us children, once told us that he knew of a colored man, one Wingate Stephens, who said he had a cow who lost her calf and in her grief adopted a black snake in its stead. This snake used to suck her and at night when she lay down to sleep and rest, it would cuddle up close to her and keep warm, Wingate said. He finally got so fed up with this that he killed the snake, and he told me — “and I believe it,” said Faulkner — the cow lost all her appetite, finally dried up from giving milk and at last died. “There are a lot of quare things in this world,” said Faulkner. And we entranced children heartily agreed.

*lizzie*

A T-model Ford car, usually referred to in the old days as a “tin lizzie.”

*Loaf* and invite your soul.

Half a *loaf* is better than no loaf.

*George Lobdell*

Another dreamer in the long line of visionary seekers and workers in the Valley. My friend, the Honorable John A. Oates, in his thorough and estimable *The Story of Fayetteville*, gives a good account of Lobdell:

“Ever since assuming charge of the Lobdell Car Wheel Company of Wilmington, Delaware, back in the early 1840’s, George Lobdell had devoted a large part of his time, money and energy toward improving the safety factor of the then infant railroad industry. He was always breaking up car wheels, studying them to see why they held up, or didn’t.

“About the end of the War Between the States he got hold of some car wheels from a captured Confederate military train. Lobdell was astounded at the toughness of these wheels — they were as superior to the average car wheel as a streamliner is to a switch engine.

“Immediately he set out on the trail of these captured car wheels in an effort to locate the source of the iron from which they had been made. The trail was long and devious, finally ending at the deserted ruins of John Colville’s log-pen furnace in the Buckhorn Hills.

“On the site of Colville’s furnace, George Lobdell set about creating a Pittsburgh of the Cape Fear country. A battery of modern blast furnaces was proposed and construction of one began immediately with the others to follow in rapid order. His engineers and geologists surveyed and tested

the surrounding ore beds.

“The first of his furnaces went into blast in 1876. From it poured over 300 tons of the finest iron he’d ever seen. Then the rich vein of ore he had been mining was chopped off short by a rock fault. His geologists had placed too much faith in surface outcroppings. The lost vein of Buckhorn is still lost, and Lobdell’s dream of an empire of steel in the red hills of Buckhorn vanished with it.”

*loblolly pine*

Pine, common old field pine, especially grown now for pulpwood.

*locked bowels*

An old folk diagnosis of constipation, appendicitis, or any condition in which bowel movements were obstructed.

*locket*

A common ornament for women in the old days and often used to contain a bit of a loved one’s hair or tiny picture of him or her. Lockets are no longer advertised in the Sears-Roebuck catalogue, which firm was the main source of supply when I was a boy. Prices ranged from forty cents to six dollars and seventy-five cents, “solid gold.” Monograms could be engraved for thirty-five to seventy-five cents.

*lock horns*

To fight, to have a hot argument, to oppose each other.

*Lockwood’s folly*

A foolish or impractical undertaking.

As the story has it, mainly legend, a man named Lockwood came from the West Indies into the lower part of the Valley in the late 17th or early 18th century and set to work in mighty doings. He thought he and his hundred slaves could handle the Indians as well as take care of a kingdom of land. He built a great mansion and set to clearing fields for his indigo, wheat and tobacco crops. He marched out and attacked the marauding Indians, and there, as Uncle Remus said, he broke his pipe stem. The Indians slaughtered them all. The mansion was burned and the fields left to grow up in briars, honeysuckle and brambles. People still call the old homesite “Lockwood’s folly” and often say with living and therefore smug authority, “Lockwood’s folly teaches you never to bite off more than you can chew.”

*locusts*

A horde of beggars.

*lodge*

To get caught or hung. “His hat got lodged in a tree and he couldn’t get it down.”

*Loey hee hoey* and hushaby baby,  
 Hushaby baby, don't cry.  
*Loey hee hoey* and hushaby baby,  
 Your father (mother) will come by and by.

If I had a wife and she would get drunk  
 I tell you just what I would do,  
 I'd get me a boat and send her afloat  
 And paddle my own canoe.  
 (A lullaby.)

### *loggy*

Drowsy, stupid, lazy.

### *log-heap*

Logs cut in lengths for handling and piled in heaps for burning. In the old days we used to clear a lot of land, cutting down trees, sawing them up and selling the bigger ones for lumber, and the smaller ones we would pile in heaps. Then at night we would set them afire with pieces of lightwood stumps or logs. And it was a wonderful sight to see these great heaps burning at night, and my father and the Negro helpers and we boys all working away keeping them punched up and burning brightly. And, of course, often the neighbors would be called in to help at the logrolling.

### *lollypop*

Silly stuff, a foolish person. In the old days, a sweetened cake.

### *London Bridge*

One of the most popular of all singing games. The verses often vary but so far as I know the tune never. We used to sing it with an almost endless list of materials with which to repair the old bridge.

“London Bridge is falling down, falling down,  
 falling down,  
 London Bridge is falling down, my fair lady.”

The singing game continues with each of the following repeated according to the above pattern.

Build it up with silver and gold, etc.  
 Silver and gold will fade away, etc.  
 Build it up with iron and steel, etc.  
 Iron and steel will bend and break, etc.  
 Build it up with sticks and stones, etc.  
 Sticks and stones will pass away, etc.

I suppose there is some cryptic or allegorical meaning in the fact that whatever

materials are used to repair the bridge, it always breaks down again — silver, gold, iron, steel, sticks, stones, bricks, mortar — whatever. If a watchman is set to guard the bridge, he will fall asleep. If a dog, it will be seduced by a bone. If a cock, a hen will lure it away, and so on.

Two of the tallest players represent the bridge, clasping hands and holding them high up. Other players in a line pass under while the two players representing the bridge sing alternate verses. (Sometimes all of us players would sing.) The two players (the bridge) agree on the time of catching a prisoner, say, after any certain verse. Then they drop their arms around the prisoner and they sing.

“Here’s a prisoner we have got.”

Then in a whisper one of the “bridge” asks which the “prisoner” would prefer, say, “A diamond necklace or a small bag of gold.” He chooses one and stands behind the bridge player who represents that choice. The game continues until all have made their choice. Then the players, now lined up behind their respective leaders, engage in a tug of war. The side wins which succeeds in pulling the other side across a given line.

### “The Lone Pilgrim”

To me one of the most haunting of all old pre-Civil War hymns. Years and years ago I came across it in Billy Walker’s *Southern Harmony and Musical Companion* and was taken with it. Right then I determined to get it into one of my outdoor dramas — as part of our musical heritage just as I was using historical characters and their actions as part of that heritage. I wrote a play, put it in, then took it out as not exactly fitting into the play’s story needs. Finally, a few years ago I used it in a Texas play, “The Lone Star,” and it is singing its lament on the Galveston stage each summer. I hope it will keep on singing for a long time.

“I came to the place where the lone pilgrim lay,  
And pensively stood by the tomb,  
When in a low whisper I heard something say,  
‘How sweetly he rests here alone.’

“The tempest may howl and the loud thunders roll,  
And gathering storms may arise,  
Yet calm are his feelings, at rest is his soul,  
The tears are all wiped from his eyes.”

It’s a *lonesome* washing that has no man’s shirt in it.

*lone woman*  
A widow.

as *long* as a country mile

as *long* as a piece of string

*long and short of it*

The whole story.

as *long as Pat stayed in the army*

A very short time indeed.

*pull a long bow*

To exaggerate, be boastful.

*make a long face*

To show unnecessary grief, to mock dolefully.

*a long grace and no meat*

A lot of to-do with little results.

*the long-haired man*

Jesus.

*long haul*

The long test, the continuing struggle.

*long head*

A very common-sense person.

*long home*

The grave. "Man goeth to his long home and the mourners go about the street."

*longleaf pine*

Once the tree-glory of the Valley as well as most of eastern North Carolina below the fall line. For a long time these trees were sources of income for the people in lumber, turpentine and tar. The great trees are all gone now, save a few patches preserved here and there as on the James Boyd estate in Southern Pines.

When I was a boy, we in the winter were typically busy cutting logs for a bit of income. And what huge trees some of them were! Many of the logs were so large (three and four feet in diameter) that deep gaps had to be cut in them before the logcart-axle could straddle them for hauling.

Down in the swamp of Middle Prong Creek stood one of our pines, unbelievably majestic — twenty-nine feet (I measured it) in circumference and at least a hundred and twenty-five feet high. There was a hornets' nest hanging from its lowest limbs and my brother Hugh and I often with our beanshooters tried to hit it with pebbles, but it was so high up we never could even rouse the hornets out.

In those days trees were meant to be cut down. And so since this giant one was too big for hauling, my father sold it to Mr. Joe Turner Matthews for five dollars to make shingles out of. It took him and his three sons more than two days to cut it down. Then it was found to be too tough for splitting and so was left to rot. I was away at school when it was cut, but later Mr. Matthews, with a light in his eyes, told me of the tremendous noise it made on hitting the earth. "Why, Paul," he said, "it shook the world—and the crows and varmints left the swamp same as if an earthquake had struck. A lot of people came to see it fall and they said there'd never been nothing like it."

The truth is, I think, Mr. Matthews was more interested in the drama of the great tree's falling than in getting shingles. He was an experienced woodsman and must have known such a monster would not be good shingle-timber. The stumps of these trees are still a great source of fat lightwood. See "lightwood splinters."

*long (sweet) potatoes*

Yams as contrasted with Irish potatoes.

*longs and shorts*

Long underwear and short underwear.

*by a long sight*

Much the same as long shot.

*long-sighted*

Sagacious, foresighted.

*long straw pine*

Longleaf pine.

*Longstreet Church*

An old Presbyterian church now in the Fort Bragg military reservation. The voice of its preachers is long hushed away and the voices of mighty guns in target practice rattle the windows instead. The church was founded by that indefatigable servant of God, the Reverend James Campbell, in 1758, along with Old Bluff and Barbecue churches (q.v.). In the early days the sermons were in both Gaelic and English. Gradually the "auld tongue" died out and English took over.

*long sweetening*

Molasses.

*long taw*

A great distance, a difficult undertaking.



*long trail*

Death or the process of dying into death.

*longways*

Lengthwise.

*look*

A word of attention. "Look, Atlee, I don't want your worrying your head about those biscuits."

Appearance. "John doesn't look good since he took all that calomel."

To search for. "I looked my cow all day long and couldn't find it."

*Look* before you leap.

*Look* both ways.

*look* nine ways for Sunday

*Look* not a gift horse in the mouth.

You may *look* farther and fare worse.

Don't *look* for the horse you ride on.

Don't *look* for your specs while they're on your nose.

*look and see*

To search for, to check on. "I'll look and see if the paper has come." Often, "I'll go look and see."

*Look at you!*

A scolding.

*to look as if butter would melt in his mouth*

A hypocritically pious person.

*Look-a-there!*

An exclamation, calling attention to a matter or emphasizing something.

*look back*

To regret.

*look big*

To show off, to appear more than one is, to be rambunctious.

*look down one's nose*

To deride or to snub.

*look for a needle in a haystack*

To seek for something impossible of finding, or to try to attempt an action

impossible to perform.

*Look here.*

Pay attention, mind what one says.

*looking*

Appearance or condition. "You'll be a pretty looking thing with your ass full of buckshot — stay away from that old man's gal."

No *looking glass* ever told a woman she was ugly.

*looking sight*

An odd appearance or spectacle. Also, a homely person, an ill-favored thing. "When you put on that old dress you are a looking sight!"

*looking to*

Planning to, intending to. "I'm looking to go out to Texas next month."

*Lookit!*

Exclamation.

*look on*

To read with or to share a book with a person. "John, you look on with Henry there and read that piece about the crane that got caught with the cows."

*look one's head*

To search one's head for lice. "Come here, boy, and let me look your head."

*look out*

To be on one's guard, to watch. "Look out or you'll get hurt."

*look over*

To forgive, to ignore, to overlook.

*look-see*

A look around, an inspection, an appraisal, a search.

*look sharp*

Be careful.

*looks like*

It seems as if, also a sense of ought in the expression. "Looks like he'd take care of his poor brother's little orphans." "Looks like it'll rain."

*look up to*

To defer to, to admire.

*Look where you're going!*

*loo-loo*

A stunning thing or act, same as lulu.

*loon*

A very wild bird, a crazy person.

as *loony* as an owl

*loony bin*

The lunatic asylum.

*loop-legged*

Bow-legged.

as *loose* as a goose

*on the loose*

Free, uncommitted, fancy-free.

*have a loose screw*

Lacking in common sense. "That girl has got a loose screw somewhere."

*loosey-goosey*

Relaxed, flexible. "I can hit the ball if I walk up there all loosey-goosey."

The *Lord* giveth and the Lord taketh away.

The *Lord* is my shepherd, I shall not want.

The *Lord* is slow to anger.

The *Lord* knows and he won't tell.

He hollers *Lord* and follows devil.

O *Lord above*, look down in love

Upon us, your little scholars.

We hired a fool to teach our school

And paid him nineteen dollars.

(A derisive rhyme.)

*Lord a-mercy!*

An exclamation.

*lord god*

The pileated woodpecker, a bird about the size of a crow, very striking with his red head, growing more and more rare each year in the South.

*The Lord is in my mouth!*

This was, and now and then still is, a common shout by fundamentalist Valley preachers from their pulpits at street corners.

As a boy I heard of “Reverend” Amos Whitney who dressed himself hastily one cold morning to hurry to his pulpit in the nearby Holiness Church. He put on his best pair of pants which had been hanging on a nail in his room for some time. Unknown to him, wasps had built a nest in them. In the midst of his sermon and shoutings of “the Lord is in my mouth,” he stopped suddenly. In the heat of his efforts, the wasps had got livened up, and they suddenly let loose on him with their stingers. He gave out a yell and started clawing at himself ‘fore and aft. He shrieked, “The Lord may be in my mouth, folkses, but the devil’s in my britches!” And with that he tore out of the house of God as if the dogs were after him and made for the woods to shed his britches.

*Lord love a duck*

An exclamation.

*Lord love you!*

An exclamation.

*lord manners*

Leave something on one’s plate. “Don’t forget lord manners, son.”

*the Lord’s patch (acre)*

In the Valley it has been a custom in past times for a farmer to set aside an acre of crops, the proceeds from which would go to the Lord. This is usually referred to as the Lord’s patch or the Lord’s acre. My friend, Joe Matthews, a sort of wildish young fellow, got religion at old Pleasant Union Church, and he set aside an acre of cotton for the Lord. He tended it well, but there came a long rainy spell and terrible floods fell and a great gully was washed across the Lord’s patch. Also, the crabgrass (or General Green, as they called it) broke out and took over things. Joe looked at it and let out an unbeliever’s laugh saying, “Well, if the Lord don’t care any more about his patch than that, why he can have it.” And so Joe abandoned it and religion and went to sinning again.

*the Lord’s will*

The will of God, the power that causes all things to happen as they do happen.

Lem Adams, a poor white tenant farmer, believed devoutly in God’s (the Lord’s) will and was a fervent leader in the Holiness Church near Falcon — called “The Sanctified and Only True Church of God.” He didn’t believe in doctors, and so he and his little obedient wife trusted in prayer to save his baby daughter Iola when she fell sick with diphtheria. But prayer failed. “Yes, my baby’s dead,” he said to me, “and I try not to grieve, for I know it’s the Lord’s will.”

And he lifted his washed-out pale blue eyes trustingly to the sky as I looked at him, troubled in my mind.

Later Lem became a wandering preacher and held services on the streets of Dunn and Erwin — wherever anyone would listen. Once or twice I saw him preaching to the empty air, people passing him by without stopping. And when that happens in the Valley or most anywhere in the South, you can imagine how poor the preacher is — as well as how patient and determined to follow the Lord's will.

### *the Lord willing*

An expression of faith even by the unfaithful. "The Lord willing, and if nothing don't happen, I'll be there a-Monday."

### *Lordy!*

An exclamation.

### *"Lorena"*

A popular Civil War song. It was published in 1857 — words by Reverend H.D.L. Webster and melody by J.P. Webster, no kin. In a few years after its publication it was being sung all over the country, especially among the soldiers in the war. It became so popular that mothers North and South named their daughters after the heroine of the piece. My grandmother named my mother-to-be Betty Lorena Byrd. For all the beauty and romance of the middle name, I am glad she was called Betty. It seems to me more down-to-earth and homey and therefore more beautiful.

Perhaps the main reason for the song's popularity in the 1860's was that, in addition to its heart-touching story and most singable melody, it brought back reminders of sweet and tender lost times before the red carnage, waste and sufferings of war afflicted the land. The contrast cried out its message.

"The years creep slowly past, Lorena,  
 The snow is on the grass again.  
 The sun's low down the sky, Lorena,  
 The frost gleams where the flow'rs have been.  
 But the heart throbs on as warmly now  
 As when the summer days were nigh.  
 Oh, the sun can never dip so low  
 A-down affection's cloudless sky—  
 The sun can never dip so low  
 A-down affection's cloudless sky.

"A hundred months have pass'd, Lorena,  
 Since I last held that hand in mine  
 And felt that pulse beat fast, Lorena,  
 Tho' mine beat faster far than thine.  
 A hundred months, 'twas flowery May  
 When up the hilly slope we climbed

To watch the dying of the day,  
 And hear the distant church bells chime—  
 To watch the dying of the day  
 And hear the distant church bells chime.

“The story of that past, Lorena,  
 Alas! I care not to repeat,  
 The hopes that could not last, Lorena,  
 They lived but only lived to cheat.  
 I would not cause e’en one regret  
 To rankle in your bosom now,  
 For ‘If we try we may forget,’  
 Were words of thine long years ago—  
 For ‘If we try we may forget,’  
 Were words of thine long years ago.

“It matters little now, Lorena,  
 The past is in th’ eternal past.  
 Our heads will soon lie low, Lorena,  
 Life’s tide is ebbing out so fast.  
 There is a Future! Oh, thank God,  
 Of life this is so small a part!  
 ’Tis dust to dust beneath the sod!  
 But there, *up there*, ’tis heart to heart.”

My mother used to sing this song around the house when we children were small. Then as years passed and we grew older she quit singing it. Maybe she had begun to consider war and all things connected with it a bitter and dismal chapter in American history. And she could also have had a clutching fear that a future war or wars might tear her sons from her.

She died before she could see at least part of that fear fulfilled.

You can’t *lose* what you ain’t got.

*lose one’s cool*

To lose one’s temper, to blow up in anger.

*Lost* time is never found again.

For the Son of Man has come to save that which is *lost*.

*Lot*

A character in the Bible whose wife became more famous by being turned into a pillar of salt. Lot was usually used to impress us as young people with the kind of luck that befalls a wayward and indecisive character.

*a lot on the ball*

Gifted, adept.

*loud*

loud-mouthed, over-boisterous.

as *loud* as a horn

as *loud* as a loose-tongued woman

as *loud* as two skeletons wrestling on a tin roof

so *loud* you couldn't hear it thunder

He mashes on the *loud* pedal.

*louse*

A low-down fellow.

A small wingless flattened insect that used to inhabit the heads of most of the Valley children. In our family the fine-tooth comb was in constant use. Sometimes Mother used mercurial ointment or Fitch's horse liniment to anoint our heads.

There was in the old days a common folk saying that if one would take the first louse found on a baby's head and crack it on the Bible, the baby would become a preacher, but let the louse go and the baby would become a lawyer. We can take our choice.

*to skin a louse for his tallow*

To take much pain with little result.

*louse path*

The parting in a person's hair.

*lousy*

Crummy, dirty, cheap.

*Love* and weather can never be depended upon.

*Love* is blind.

*Love* is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave.

*Love* is the fulfilling of the law.

*Love* it is a killing thing.

Beauty is a blossom.

(A rhyme.)

*Love* laughs at locksmiths.

*Love* me little, *love* me long.

*Love* me, *love* my dog.

*Love* rejoiceth in truth.

*Love* thy neighbor as thyself.

*Love* your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you and pray for them that despitefully use you.

You can't live on *love*.

All's fair in *love* and war.

Perfect *love* casteth out fear.

Greater *love* hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friend.

True *love* is the weft of life, but it comes through a sorrowful shuttle.

If you *love* me like I love you,  
No knife can cut our love in two.  
(An asseveration rhyme.)

Many waters cannot quench *love*, neither can the floods drown it.

The course of true *love* never runs smooth.

Hot *love* soon cools.

It's *love* that makes the world go round.

The hotter the *love*, the colder the freeze.

I could not *love* thee, dear, so much, loved I not honor more.

Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength.

*love apple*

Tomato plant, formerly thought to be poisonous. My grandmother Green grew the plant simply for decoration. "We never thought of eating them when I was a child," said my father.

*love child*

An illegitimate child.

*love curl*

A little curl girls let hang down in front of their ears. Same as love lock or beaucatcher.

It's better to have *loved* and lost than never to have loved at all.



The heart that has truly *loved* never forgets.

It's better to be *loved* than honored.

*loveded*

Loved.

*love him to death*

Excessive love.

*love-in*

A specially affectionate gathering.

*love-knot*

Entwined jewelry.

as *lovely* as a rose

*love of Mike!*

An exclamation.

*love pirate*

A Casanova, a love-'em-and-leave-'em guy.

*love powder*

Any of several powder concoctions put out by herb doctors and voodoo artists to create or add to sexual attraction.

*lover's knot*

Sexual intercourse.

All the world *loves* a lover.

*Lord love us!*

An exclamation.

*love vine*

Known also as dodder or field dodder. It is a leafless parasite with whitish stems. If allowed to have its way, it can overrun a flower bed or border and choke the flowers into a stunted and even wilted condition. It also can play havoc with a wheat or oat crop. Its clinging nature gives it its name. In the old days some of the Valley people found it useful in treating sick cows and mules.

*love-dovey*

Sentimental term of affection.

*'low*

Allow.

as *low* as a snake

as *low-down* as a snake's belly

*lower region*

Hell.

*lowground*

Low land.

*lowing cow*

A sign of bad luck or death. Also denotes a cow in heat.

*low man on the totem pole*

One in an inferior position.

*low-rate*

To criticize adversely.

*Lucifer*

The devil conceived of as a fallen angel. "Yes," said Uncle Monroe as we sat by the fire one night, "you ask about the devil. Yes, I believe in him, and his name was Luseefer."

One of the many names for the devil. According to Scriptural legend, Lucifer was once a bright angel in heaven but, because of his pride and his rebellion against God, he was cast out and became the ruler over the damned souls in hell. See Isaiah 14:12-14 which says in poetic language—

"How art thou fallen from heaven,  
O Lucifer, son of the morning!  
How art thou cut down to the ground,  
Which didst weaken the nations!  
For thou hast said in thine heart  
'I will ascend into heaven  
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God,  
I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation,  
In the sides of the north  
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,  
I will be like the most High.' "

*down on one's luck*

To have a long spell of ill luck.

*fisherman's luck*

No luck at all. To come home hungry, wet, disgusted and with no fish to show.

*worse luck!*

An exclamation.

*lucky* in cards, unlucky in love

*lucky star*

To be born under a lucky star is to be especially lucky in one's efforts and plans. There's an old astrological belief that each person born in the world is born under a star, and some stars are unlucky and some are lucky. This makes about as much sense as the Freudian curse of the unconscious with which man, so Freud says, as I understand him, is born into the world.

*lug*

The nut on a wheel bolt. Also a sorry person.

*luggish*

Heavy, sluggish, dull, slow. "I feel luggish today."

*lugs*

The lower leaves of a tobacco plant. They ripen first and are gathered in the first "priming."

*a lulu*

A faux pas, same as loo-loo. "Nixon has picked some lulus in his cabinet."

*lumber room*

A room in a dwelling where odds and ends are kept. Also known as plunder room.

*lump in*

To include. "No wonder he had such a big expense account, he lumped in all his side expenses."

If you don't like it, you can *lump it*.

Accept, even if unhappily or with dissatisfaction.

*lump sum*

The complete and exact amount, total amount in one payment. "I'll put in your sewer for the lump sum of \$4000."

*lunch hooks*

Fingers.

*lush*

A low-down, dangerous person, also refers to a gangster's moll.

*Lydia Pinkham*

A famous name in patent medicine realms. Mrs. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has brought relief for female disorders to generations of sufferers

in the Valley and is still going strong. Ask at any drugstore.

We boys used to have a lengthy song we sang about Lydia and her medicine, beginning thus:

“O sing, sing, sing of Lydia Pinkham  
And of her friendship for the female race—  
She invented her vegetable compound,  
Now the papers all publish her face.

“Mamie Twitchum was brokenhearted,  
She had nothing beneath her blouse  
Till they fed her three bottles of Compound—  
Now they milk her with the cows.”

And so on to ever more miraculous physiological improvements.

It now comes in liquid and tablet form. The current price in the Chapel Hill drugstores is \$3.68 for 72 tablets and \$3.17 for a small bottle of the liquid.

### *lye soap*

A homemade product made from a mixture of lye, water and grease.

My mother made it in the same big iron pot we used for heating water for hog-killing. First we would get a can or two of Red Devil Lye, mix this in water, stirring and stirring until the lye was thoroughly dissolved. Then hog grease would be added. This would be boiled for a good while, maybe twenty minutes. Any kind of grease would do — bacon grease, side meat grease — grease from any part of the hog.

The heavy mixture was put into the big pot, water was added, perhaps a few gallons. A fire was built around the pot and kept going for hours. The hot water would gradually evaporate and the mixture slowly rise to the top as soap. When the proper amount of boiling had been done, the fire was let die out and the ingredients cool and the soap harden. The next day Mother would take a kitchen knife and cut the somewhat hardened mass into cakes. Now we had soap enough to last for months. Sometimes the more fastidious housewives put perfume in their soap. A favorite and easy way was to boil heart leaves (wild ginger) with the mixture. By the time I was a teenage boy, homemade soap was passing away. Octagon soap and other manufactured brands were taking over.

I remember my mother saying that her mother used hickory ashes instead of lye, this last not being available in the earlier days.

### *lying down*

Cowardly, will-less. “And cuss him as I would he took it all lying down.”

### *lying out*

Untended, left lying fallow. “All my corn land is lying out, now that Uncle Sam pays me to put it in the soil bank.”

*lynch law*

The law of the mob which is no law at all. The practice, especially in the South, of mob vengeance on an unlucky person accused of a crime whether guilty or not. "The taking of the law into one's own hands."

The story of lynchings in the South, and sometimes in the North, is a shameful one in the history of this country. True, we have dropped the atom bomb on thousands of helpless people and we helped destroy both Vietnam and Cambodia, but we have improved in one matter — lynching.

I never saw a lynching except in my imagination but I remember a hot summer day when our sawmilling was stopped because of one. When the whistle blew at twelve o'clock, Mr. Moody, the sawyer, made an announcement to us. "Well, boys," he said, "we ain't gonna saw this evening (afternoon)." "Why not, Mr. Moody?" someone asked. "Because," said he, "I got to go off and help lynch a nigger."

He said no more and drove away in his A-model Ford.

Mr. Moody boarded at our house, and that night at the supper table I kept looking at his strong, long-fingered brown hands, wondering, wondering. It was our custom to go out on the front porch after supper and sit in the cool darkness awhile before going to bed. I was a-quiver to ask him about the lynching. He smoked his cigarette in silence. Finally I could endure it no longer.

"What — what happened, Mr. Moody?" I said.

"What happened what?" he answered.

"I mean — mean about the lynching, sir?"

"Aw," he said disgustedly, "I got there too late. They'd already hanged the black son of a bitch and he was dead as a nit. But I reached up with my pistol and put three bullets through his head. Well, good night, I want some good sleep, got a lot of sawing to do tomorrow." He threw away the stub of his cigarette and went off to bed. No doubt he got his good sleep, but I didn't.

*lyre-leaved sage*

This plant grows in most parts of the United States and is common in North Carolina. Its big lyre-shaped leaves give it its name. It flourishes in sandy woods and barrens and is conspicuous for its lavender blooms. Sometimes called Cancer Weed, its juice is used to remove warts and other cancerous growths. Was used, I should say, for now in our more enlightened days we have the surgeon's knife and chemotherapy.

# M

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## *Mac*

A person, anyone. "Hey, Mac, close that gate when you go out."

## *Allan MacDonald*

The husband of the famous Scottish heroine Flora MacDonald. He was a strikingly handsome man and was so described by Drs. Johnson and Boswell when they visited him and Flora in the Hebrides. The description from their journal ran as follows: "He was quite the figure of a gallant Highlander — 'the graceful mien and manly looks.' He had his tartan plaid thrown about him, a large blue bonnet with a knot of black ribbon like a cockade, a brown short coat of a kind of duffle, a tartan vest with gold buttons and gold buttonholes, a bluish fillibeg and tartan hose. He had jet black hair tied behind and with screwed ringlets on each side, and was a large stately man with a steady sensible countenance." And Boswell goes on to say that his heart was sore to learn that Allan had fallen sorely back in his affairs, was under a load of debt and intended to go to America. "However, nothing but what was good was present, and I pleased myself in thinking that so fine a fellow would be well everywhere."

Allan was one of the commanders at the tragic Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge in 1776 where the Tory power in North Carolina was broken. This battle, though much ignored by the historians, actually was one of the most important in the Revolutionary War. If the Tories had won on that day, then the Patriot cause in North Carolina would have been split in two and no doubt the Tory power would have grown enormously and perhaps become too strong to be dislodged in the South.

In this battle Allan and his son Sandy were captured along with several hundred other Loyalists and finally were sent in exchange to Canada — where many a self-reliant and determined follower of the King was later moved. The story of the Tory upheaval in the Valley has never been fully told — in fact, a shameful story and one too often written by the true red-blooded

American devotee of individuality and democratic prowess. Many Loyalists after the war were robbed of their possessions and some who were not so loyal to Britain were likewise so dispossessed. All that was needed for this sort of robbery was for some Whig of importance to squeal that so-and-so was a Loyalist, get him dispossessed and then fall heir to his land and holdings through court action. And so the Loyalist victim would find himself on the long migration to join his fellows in Canada. See "go to Halifax."

### *Flora MacDonald*

Allan MacDonald's wife, the famous Scottish heroine. In the Johnson-Boswell *Tour to the Hebrides* she is described thus: "By and by supper came, when there appeared his (Allan's) spouse, the celebrated Miss Flora. She was a little woman, of a mild and genteel appearance, mighty soft and well-bred. To see Mr. Samuel Johnson salute Miss Flora MacDonald was a wonderful romantic scene to me." And Johnson himself said: "We were entertained with the usual hospitality by Mr. MacDonald and his lady Flora MacDonald, a name that will be mentioned in history and, if courage and fidelity be virtues, mentioned with honor. She is a woman of middle stature, soft features, gentle manners and elegant presence."

Flora became the darling of Scotch society and of some English society too for her heroic preservation of Bonny Prince Charlie. After the Battle of Culloden Moor in 1746 when English soldiery were searching for the fleeing prince, a price of 30,000 pounds being set on his head, she helped him escape by disguising him as a maidservant in her service. It is remarkable that in the upheaval of the Scottish citizenry of that time not one of the poverty-stricken crofters or dissident people betrayed the prince, whatever the enormous reward for such betrayal.

For a while Flora was shut up in the Tower of London for this loyalty to the House of Stuart. But soon the King pardoned her. Ballads were written about her, toasts were given in her name, and everywhere she went she was acclaimed by admiring crowds.

Times were hard in Scotland in the middle 18th century, and Allan and Flora finally in the year 1774 migrated to North Carolina in search of a better life for themselves and their children. The Revolutionary War was brewing, and when once more trouble swirled about their heads, the blood oath of loyalty, which the MacDonalds along with other Scotsmen had taken after the Battle of Culloden in 1746, still had its power over them. (See "blood oath") And too, Flora devoutly believed by this time in the stability and rightness of royal authority. When the Revolutionary War broke out, she considered the Patriots' cause to be that of raggle-taggle irresponsible rebels. She stood firm for Britain. Consequently as time went by she and her household (Allan and Sandy already being prisoners of war in the North) were driven from North Carolina and she returned to die in penury and

despair in Scotland.

Some years ago I wrote a play about her but in no way did justice to this fine and beautiful character.

*Hugh MacDonald*

Flora's stepfather. This Hugh had kidnapped Flora's young widowed mother and married her when Flora was a child. He was supposed to be one of the most physically powerful men in all Scotland. Strange as it may seem, he was a captain in charge of a company of young soldiers who apparently tried to capture Bonny Prince Charlie even while Flora was guiding the luckless prince through bracken and mountain passes to safety. Old Hugh — one-eyed Hugh as he was called, for as a child he had lost the sight of one eye by running into a jagged limb — migrated to North Carolina ahead of Flora and settled far out in Anson County. Allan and Flora finally settled nearby on Cheek's Creek and there started to build their new life which was destroyed, as I say, by the Revolutionary War. Old Hugh died in 1782 and is buried in an unmarked grave there on a hill above Mountain Creek.

*mackerel sky*

A sky dappled with little clouds more decorative than rainy.

*holy mackerel!*

A free interjection.

*mad*

A rage. "He's got a mad on and you'll have to wait till he cools off."

*mad* as a hatter

*mad* as a hornet

*mad* as a March hare

*mad* as a snake in haying time

*mad* as a wet sitting hen

as *mad* as fire

*mad* as hops

*mad* as the devil

so *mad* he couldn't spit

*have a mad on*

To be infatuated with.

*made*

To go. "He made right out the door."



To have sexual intercourse. "The first night I met that girl I made her."

*"Mademoiselle from Armentieres"*

A song especially popular with the A.E.F. in World War I. Innumerable versions were sung, and many of them, even in the license of today, unprintable. Though tinged with Sunday School puritanism, I sang them along with my buddies — there in the muck and misery of Flanders Field. We pronounced "Armentieres" in good old Valley English, "Armenteers."

"Mademoiselle from Armentieres,  
parlez vous,

"Mademoiselle from Armentieres,  
parlez vous,

"Mademoiselle from Armentieres,  
Hasn't been kissed (f--ked) in forty years—"

And so on — as rough as we could make it.

*made out of whole cloth*

Of solid character.

*made over*

Petted, cuddled. "She made over him all the time."

*madstone*

A stone supposed to be found in the stomach of a deer. It was especially efficacious against the bite of mad dogs. According to dozens of witnesses — lawyers, doctors, preachers — whom I have consulted, there is no doubt about it. This stone is a reality and a most powerful cure not only for mad dog bites but for poisonous infections of all sorts, including snakes.

In size these stones were about an inch wide and two or three inches long, gray colored, and of a porous nature. Luther Gunter told me that his grandfather, old man Darge Singleton, once had a Negro slave boy bitten by a rabid dog and he went over to Boyd Urquhart, some thirty miles away beyond Smithfield, to get his stone. Urquhart wouldn't send it till old Darge had entered into a bond in the amount of \$1,000 for its safe return. He sent the required bond by his son Corbett and got the use of the stone and cured the Negro boy. Urquhart used to charge as much as \$50 for each use of it.

Bishop Cheshire, a man of repute and strong in the Episcopal Church, once told me he had seen one of these stones applied and, when it was laid against the poisoned wound, it seized upon it and stuck tight as a leech or a Harnett County seed tick. Then as the poison was being sucked out of the wound by the stone, the stone gradually turned dark. Presently, full of poison, it fell off and dropped to the ground. After this the stone was placed

in a bowl of milk and left there several hours, and the poison exuded from it, turning the milk a sickish green. At the proper time the stone was lifted out, dried off and ready for another use at \$50 a suck.

For years I have tried to find one of these ancient stones. They all seem to have disappeared forever but the fame of them remains.

*Mae West*

An especially strong cocktail. "Drink it, and you won't come up sometime."

*maggots in one's head*

Crazy.

*magic lantern*

Japanese lantern.

*magic numbers*

See "numbers."

*magnolia*

A beautiful and popular shade tree throughout the Valley and the South. It has become a sort of cognomen for the culture, the beauty and the old-timeyness of the region.

*magnolia leaf*

A fetish token.

Galley Farrington who works for me now and then told me recently of his experience with a magnolia leaf and the woman who used it. "She came driving down there to the store," he said, "where a lot of us fellows were chewing the rag — this woman did — and whew! what a knockout she was. She smelled high of cologne and had some sort of brass earrings big as silver dollars in her ears. She said that she was out to bring joy to mankind. 'You all fellows are always broke, ain't you?' she said. We agreed that was mostly true. 'Well,' she said, 'I can show you how never to be broke. See these magnolia leaves,' and then out of her big wove handbag she pulled a lot of magnolia leaves. 'If you will take one of these here leaves,' she said, 'and put a dollar bill on it and fold it up inside, put it in your pocket, you'll always have good luck and you'll never be broke for you'll have that dollar. But mostly and the main thing,' she said, 'is you'll have good luck. Who's got a dollar?' Some of us had a dollar. I just happened to have one bill so I handed it to her. She folded it up in the leaf into a tight little wad and handed it back to me. 'Now put that in your pocket, honey,' she said, 'and keep it there and the first thing you know good luck will start happening.' Two or three of the other fellows had dollar bills and fool-like — just like me — they handed them over to that woman and saw her fold 'em into the leaf and hand it back to them. 'Now you see,' she said, 'I ain't charging a penny for my service. I just want to do good to my fellowman. Now you all boys,'

she said, 'don't touch them leaves in your pocket for the next hour. Let 'em stay in there and get 'climated to your body. Then it's all right to feel them. And good luck to you all boys now and I'm on my way to help other folks.' And she got into her late Ford roadster and drove off.

"It was Satiddy time and we didn't have to go to work anywhere and so we stood around chewing the rag some more and still smelling the heavy scent of that woman that was gone off. Maybe it was that scent that made us play the fool. Anyhow, after about a' hour by the clock on the Home Savings building we pulled out our magnolia leaves, opened them and, dang my soul, there was no dollar bill in any of them. That woman had really reamed us. We saw her driving sassy around Chapel Hill several times after that and far as I know she might have reamed some of them smart professors. Anyhow we were so ashamed to be made fools of by her that we didn't call the cops in to arrest her."

*magpie*

A talkative person.

*Aunt Mahaly*

A legendary witch woman who was supposed to live in the depths of the Cape Fear River swamps. I wrote a short play about her and how she bewitched and destroyed two Negro criminals.

*maiden land*

Land that comes to a man with the maid he marries.

*maiden's blushes*

Something of a subtropical shrub which grows from North Carolina to Florida. It prefers wet, boggy soil. Its greenish and pale yellow capsules grow in thick clusters among the leaves. In the autumn these mellowing leaves become ruddy-tinged, therefore the gothic name, which to me is the most important thing about the plant. In the old days it was used like Peruvian bark (quinine) for intermittent fevers.

*mail-order marriage*

A marriage arranged by correspondence, usually through answering an ad in a lonely hearts column. More than one person in the Valley has got a husband or wife by advertising for such in these love columns of magazines and papers, sometimes with good results and sometimes with bad, about the same ratio, I suppose, as occurs in the ordinary love matches arranged by closer and more passionate contact.

Take the case of Miss Maria Stuart. The people in our neighborhood used to call her the "Queen of Scotland." Of course she wasn't any queen but we called her that because she was so beautiful and was so proud and because of her name. In my past boyhood recollections I can't recall any

girl more beautiful than she was. I never saw Laura Searles who by all accounts was the most beautiful girl ever born in the Valley and who later married a titled Englishman. As a boy I used to see Miss Maria at church always radiant and fresh as a rose. And how she loved to sing in the church that old hymn "Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine"! She was besought and beset by all the young blades thereabouts, but she married none of them. The reason, so my mother said, was that she couldn't find any that suited her choosey ways. Finally she woke up one day to find herself an old maid. She was past thirty and she who had been so popular and cherished was left with only one hanger-on, a short, sawed-off fellow and bowlegged at that, named Rufus Ellington. So there she was with her memories of lovers' hand-squeezes, kisses, and dances and perfumes, fans and whispered flatteries at parties, serenading and moonlit hayrides. At last she got so desperate that she advertised for a husband. She got one all right, a fellow up out of Texas named Moulton, and he turned out to be nothing, worse than nothing. He flattered her so he got her crazy about him and had her sign over all of her property which wasn't much but which would have been enough to support her in her old age. And when he had done that, he sold the property, deserted her, went back to Texas where he had come from, and before too long she died. Her uncle put up a small tombstone to her in the churchyard, for she was penniless.

*main drag*

The main highway or central street in a small town. Also big business.

*main strength and awkwardness*

Action or procedure in a helter-skelter manner, without any plan or logical design. "Earsy was brung up by main strength and awkwardness and that's how come he's so mean."

*make*

To succeed, to win out, to get there on time. "I was coming along through the Arboretum from class one day and heard footsteps behind me, and there was elderly Collier Cobb trotting along — and on he came passing me and jiggling his heavy briefcase in his hand — 'I've got to make a train, Paul. Excuse me.' And on he went."

Mature. "The corn will make now after that good rain."

Figure, shape. "That new schoolteacher that's come to Olive Branch sure has a pretty make."

*Make* hay while the sun shines.

*Make* yourself all honey, and the flies will eat you.

If you *make* a rough bed, you have to lie in a rough bed.

As we *make* it, so we have it.

As you *make* your bed, so shall you lie on it.

*make a branch*

To urinate. "Come on, sonny, do you want to make a little branch?"

*make a break*

To make a faux pas, also to dash for freedom as a prisoner on a chain gang.

"I warned the boys not to try to make a break," said Thaddy Matthews,

"but one day one of them did and, just before he darted into the woods 200 yards away, I pulled down on him and over he went with a broken leg."

*make a leg*

To put one's leg back as in a curtsey or bow.

*make a mess*

To have a bowel movement.

To turn things upside down.

*make a puddle*

To urinate. Same as make a branch.

*make a smell*

Go to the bathroom.

*make a spring*

Urinate.

*make 'aste*

Make haste, hurry.

*make at*

To rush to meet as in a fight. "He made at me with a knife and I conked him with that handspike."

*make a trip*

Also to go to the bathroom.

*make away with*

To waste, to kill, to consume. "At the cornshucking they made away with a whole kettle of chicken stew."

Also to get away with. "The thieves made away with a lot of silverware."

*make buckle and tongue meet*

Make one's income equal the outgo.

*make for*

To hurry to reach. "A big cloud is coming up over there and we had better make for the house."

*make game of*

To mock, to laugh at.

*make good*

To succeed.

*make it*

To recover, to live through sickness. "Cal Upchurch is down sick again and from what they say it don't look like he's gonna make it this time."

*make it fly*

To do a job swiftly.

*make it warm for*

To punish, to spank.

*make like*

To pretend.

*make medicine*

To hold a conference, to plan some action.

*make no mistake*

A phrase used for emphasis. "Make no mistake about it, as a man sows, so shall he reap."

*make off with*

To steal, to carry away.

*make one's mark*

Become well-known, succeed.

*make one's pile*

To amass a fortune.

*make out*

Same as make like. "Why do you make out like you're rich when you ain't?"

To make love. "They were gone a good while, but I think they were just making out."

To get along somehow, to make ends meet, much the same as make do.

To decipher, to read as in a poor light. "Can you make out the items on the dinner check?"

To understand, comprehend. "Speak a little louder, I can't make out what you're saying."

*make out with*

To tolerate, put up with, endure.

*make passes at*

To try to hug a girl, to try to fondle, flirt.

*make the feathers (fur) fly*

To fight tooth and claw in a fisticuff, to work with fierce energy.

*make the grade*

To win out, to have success.

*make tracks*

To depart hurriedly, to run.

*make up*

To be reconciled, to become friends after a fight or quarrel.

To even up, repay. "His intensity as an artist makes up for what he lacks as a technician."

*make up to*

To court, to soft soap.

*make whoopee*

To celebrate hilariously, to hold a spree.

*makings*

The ingredients. "I planned to have pie for supper, but I don't have the makings."

Traits, talents. "He has the makings of a good student if he'd only work harder."

*making up*

To gather, to prepare, to get ready for action. "The clouds are making up in the west. We'd better hurry."

*malaria cure*

Have plenty of sunflowers growing about the house.

*Malice* drinketh its own poison.

There's as much *malice* in a wink as a word.

With *malice* toward none and charity for all.

*Mamma, Mamma*, what is that  
Twixt your legs like a hairy cat?

Pappy, Pappy, what is that  
Twixt your legs like a baseball bat?  
(A low recitation rhyme.)

*Mamma, Mamma*, have you heard?  
Papa's going to buy me a mockingbird.  
If that mockingbird don't sing,  
Papa's going to buy me a diamond ring.  
If that diamond ring turns brass,  
Papa's going to whip me on my ass.

*mammy*

To spoil, to be over-affectionate. "She mammied that boy to death when he was young and now he's grown up he ain't worth a cent."

*mammy-sick*

A spoiled child, over-dependent on its mother.

*man*

A familiar term of address, usually for emphasis and applied to either sex. "Yes, man, he's a holy terror." "And, man, did that dog run when I put turpentine under his tail."

Strength, physical power. "Get in there with that axe, Bo, and show your man."

*Man* brought nothing here and he'll take nothing away.

*Man* doth what he can and God what he will.

*Man* evolved from the lower animals.

*Man* is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward.

*Man* is conceived and born in sin.

*Man* is of the earth, earthy.

*Man* proposes, God disposes.

*Man* that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.

*Man* wants but little here below nor wants that little long.

*Man* was made from the dust.

*Man* works from sun to sun,  
Woman's work is never done.



A *man* is known by the company he keeps.

A *man* is down but never out.

A *man* is never a hero to his own servant.

A *man* is not known by his looks.

A *man* of words and not of deeds  
Is like a garden full of weeds.

A *man* without a wife  
Is not worth a wife.

A *man* who beats his mule will beat his wife.

A *man* who kicks his dog will kick his wife.

Beware of a smiling *man*.

God made him and therefore let him pass for a *man*.

No *man* can serve two masters.

Get a *man* drunk if you would know him.

Every *man* for himself and the devil take the hindmost.

Every *man* has his price.

As for *man*, his days are as grass.

No *man* is a prophet in his own country.

A silent *man* is a wise man.

As a *man* lives  
So shall he die.  
As a tree falls  
So shall it lie.

An angry *man* opens his mouth and shuts his eyes.

No *man* should be both accuser and judge.

No *man* stays far from the sweet mouth and a good table.

There's more hope for a drinking *man* than a lazy man.

Every *man* to his taste as the skunk said to the billygoat.

It takes a wise *man* to play the fool.

Never hit a *man* when he is down.

Don't bother a *man* when he's busy.

A drowning *man* will catch at a straw.

A poor *man* with children has got a millstone about his neck.

*man about town*

Sport, an easy liver, a fashionable guy.

Good *management* is better than big wage.

*man alive!*

A mild interjection.

*the man for my money*

Chosen over others, reliable person, one to be trusted.

*man in the moon*

The physiognomy of the moon's face which at a careless glance looks like the face of a man. According to the old legend he was put there as a punishment for burning brush on Sunday. We children were told that so we'd behave better and be quieter on the Sabbath Day.

The *man in the moon*

Came down too soon,

Asked the way to Norwich.

He went to the South

And burnt his mouth

A-eating hot pease porridge.

(A nursery rhyme.)

*man killer*

A vicious horse, also a wild woman.

*mankind*

An interjection. "Mankind, that was a flood and Bowling Creek looked like a lake!"

All *mankind* loves a lover.

*manna*

Extra or excess profit, financial gain with little effort.

*mannerable*

Of good manners.

*no manner account*

No good at all, lazy, indolent.

*mannerly*

Well-behaved.

*manner of means*

For emphasis. "Dan MacDougald is not buried here by any manner of means."

*in a manner of speaking*

An introductory phrase often used in a conjunctive sense similar to "as you might say so."

*manners*

Courtesies, polite actions. "Go over and make your manners to Aunt Nettie."

*Manners* make the man.

*man or a mouse*

A phrase used in reference to weak-willed, quiet, mouse-like man. "Tell me, are you a man or a mouse!"

*man person*

A man.

A *man's* a man for all that.

*man's best friend*

The dog.

I remember Uncle Bob Green telling me about the dog that Grandpa John Green had named Queenie. It seemed that Grandpa John's brother, my great-uncle William, decided to go to Texas, and he asked Grandpa if he could take Queenie with him. Grandpa finally agreed and off they went. Some months went by and one night there was a scratching at the door, and Uncle Bob said that Grandpa went to the door and there was a little spotted dog, whining and all scratched up and sore-footed, and it was Queenie. She had come all the way back. Later they had a letter from Uncle William which said that Queenie went with him across the Mississippi River and swam along as he swam his horse across. So the dog had actually swum back across the river and found her way the hundreds of miles home.

I told Dr. J.B. Rhine of the Extrasensory Perception Laboratory at Duke University about Queenie when he and his wife were gathering examples of the power of animal and bird instinct, and he was very much interested. But when I finally told him that according to Uncle Bob Green, Grandpa for a long time didn't recognize Queenie because she had worn off about six inches of her legs and was much lower down on the ground than formerly — when I told him that, Dr. Rhine looked at me and then

folded up his notebook.

A *man's* house is his castle.

A *man's* death ought to be like him.

A *man's* man is a woman's man, but a woman's man is nobody's man.

A *man's* self is his own enemy.

Better an old *man's* darling than a young man's slave.

*mansion in the sky*

A dream home in the hereafter, hungered for by the soul-starved workers here below and to which all Lord-servers can go when they die.

A *hairy man's* rich,  
A hairy wife's a witch.

*mantrap*

A woman's privity.

A woman of sexual powers. Some authors, including St. Paul, apply the term to women generally.

*manufacture or manufac*

Plug tobacco as contrasted with the old homemade twist. "Uncle Tom, give me a chew of that good manufac you got in your pocket."

*manure*

Worthless talk, soft soap.

*many a one*

Many.

*Many* a person digs his grave with his teeth.

*Many* are called, but few are chosen.

*Many* a true word is spoken in jest.

*Many* hands make light work.

as *many* as a dog has fleas

as *many* as Carter had oats  
Nothing.

*Many happy returns of the day.*

An old and tiresome birthday greeting.

*map of Canaan*

The holy, sanctified and salvation look that often shows on a person's face

when he or she has become saved from sin or, as it is so often put, saved from nature to grace.

Hiteous Belch got religion in the local church down below Smithfield and he put "the map of Canaan" in his face, and so he gave up the worldly practice of "hollering" in the fields at sundown or in the late afternoon when he was ploughing away. And from then on he apparently was a good and rather holy man, but as Itimus Ochiltree declared, "He weren't half as much fun to his friends as before." And he went on to say that he thought it was "a poor religion that makes a man a worse neighbor."

### *marble orchard*

Graveyard.

### *Marbles*

An everlastingly popular game among boys everywhere. We boys in the Valley played marbles usually in a ring. The ring could be almost any diameter, depending mainly on the levelness of the ground. Sometimes the ring was three feet across, sometimes four or five or even six or seven. Each player put his assortment of dinahs into the ring and then each player in succession shot at these dinahs with his taw, shooting from the ring mark. And how wonderful these taws were, and usually of glass and beautifully patterned. We often got little tobacco sacks to carry our marbles in and how many fisticuffs broke out as we quarreled over the spoils. For when we played for keeps, each player kept the dinahs that he knocked out of the ring with his shooting. And sometimes if two were knocked out, and the shooter failed to cry "dubs" before someone else cried out "venture dubs," he could only keep one dinah. How many variations on this game, and how many mothers in the Valley complained at the worn-out knees of the boys' stockings or their trousers! But it did no good, for marbles had the day. The game is not as popular as it once was, but it has shown no signs of actually dying out.

### *marbles*

Money, dollars. Also testicles.

If *March* comes in like a lamb, it will go out like a lion. And vice versa.

### *March hare*

A wild, irresponsible person.

### *Marching to Jerusalem*

A play-party game. It was usually played with more than six people, boys and girls. The chairs in a room were arranged in a line back to back. There was always one chair less than the number of players. The players would line up and when the music started (piano, record, organ, a solo singer or whatnot), they would march around the chairs. At the sudden stop in the music they would scramble to find seats. The one who failed to get a seat

would drop out of the game. One chair would be removed and the game go on until one of the final two marchers won.

The game was especially rough on chairs. My mother would nearly always say to us, "If you children are going to play that rough game, find you the sorriest chairs I've got — some I won't mind so bad your breaking up."

*mare dogs*

Mad dogs.

*mare's egg*

A pumpkin.

I remember when I was a little boy hearing a story about Pat, the Irishman who came into the Valley from the old country. Usually Pat was accompanied by his fellow companion Mike, but this story had to do only with Pat. Pat is coming along and he stops where some men are building a house and asks the way to Wilmington. The men tell him and then he sees a pumpkin out in the field on the slope near the river and he asks what that is. And one of the wags in the crowd tells him that this is a mare's egg. "A mare's egg?" says Pat. "What do you do with a mare's egg?" "Why," he says, "if you'll take that and set on it for an hour or two and get it good and warm, you'll hatch out a little colt." And Pat says, "Faith me Christ, I think I'll try it." So he went out in the field and sat down on the pumpkin to hatch it and the wag called out, "After you set there an hour or two, then take the mare's egg and roll it down the slope and the little colt will jump out." Of course, the wag knew the pumpkin would roll into the river and Pat would be left with the joke on him. So after about an hour Pat got up and rolled the pumpkin down the slope and it happened to hit a stump and break wide open. Now a rabbit was sitting behind the stump and the rabbit jumped up and away he went, and Pat was after him hot and heavy, calling out, "Wait, little colt, wait, little colt. Your pappy's after you." Of course, the people laughed and had their fun, and finally Pat was made acquainted with the joke and went on up the road crestfallen.

*mare's nest*

A hoax, the kind of hoax played on the above Pat.

*marigold*

One of the choicest and most popular flowers in the Valley gardens. In the old days a tincture of this highly aromatic plant had many medicinal uses. It was used for cuts and bruises, sprains and so on, and it was reported to be good even for protection against gangrene.

*marijuana*

Locoweed, crazy weed. This was first introduced as a fiber crop and escaped

into waste places. Now it is illegal to grow it for smokers use it as an intoxicant. It goes under many folk names — joints, sticks, teasticks, weed, grass, hemp, griffo, mohasky, roaches, Mary Jane, reefers, pot, muggies, mooters, Indian hay, gigglesmoke, and so on. Heroin has its own nomenclature, such as snow, stuff and junk.

### *mark*

To castrate, as mark hogs. Also to cut a notch or ownership sign in the ears of a hog or in cattle, for in the old days the stock ran wild in the woods.

### *easy mark*

A mush head, a sentimental person.

### *toe the mark*

To measure up to, to fulfill all expectations, to behave as demanded or expected.

*To market*, to market

To buy a fat hog.

Home again, home again,

Jiggety jog.

To market, to market

To buy a fat pig.

Home again, home again,

Jiggety jig.

(Nursery rhyme.)

### *Old Market House*

A famous old city center in Fayetteville. This historic landmark is a great obstruction to traffic, and many a motorist in a hurry has cursed it as he had to slow up and poke traffic-bound around it, but the historically minded people of Fayetteville are determined to keep it no matter how the lava flow of traffic pushes.

### *Marley Bright (Molly Bright)*

A children's chase game. Players are divided into two groups, and they arrange themselves on their base in two lines, say, about forty or fifty yards apart. One player, "the witch," takes his or her position to one side, halfway between the base lines. The leader on one side calls to the leader on the other, "How many miles to Marley Bright?" The other answers, "Three score and ten." The next question is "Can I get there by candlelight?" The other player calls back, "Yes, if your legs are long and light and the old witch don't catch you." Both lines then start scattering and running, each trying to reach the other's base. A player caught by the "witch" becomes the witch, and the former joins one of the lines.

This game is supposed to go back to medieval times.

*marm*

Ma'am. One common usage was in referring to a schoolmarm.

To have good luck in *marriage* the bride should wear —

Something old, something new,

Something borrowed and something blue.

Before *marriage* keep both eyes open; after marriage shut one.

*Marriages* and hangings go by destiny.

*Marriages* are made in heaven.

More's *married* now than's doing well.

Not *married* till bedded.

He that *marries* a widow with two daughters has three back doors to his house.

*marrow bones*

Deep inside one. "I could feel that fear right to my marrow bones."

*Marry* in haste and repent at leisure.

*Marry* for money, and you'll be sorry you married at all.

*Marry* in black, you'll wish yourself back,

*Marry* in red, you'll wish yourself dead,

*Marry* in yellow, you'll be 'shamed of your fellow,

*Marry* in green, you'll be 'shamed to be seen,

*Marry* in brown, you'll live out of town,

*Marry* in gray, you'll live far away,

*Marry* in white you have chosen just right,

*Marry* in blue, you'll find that will do.

(A proverb rhyme.)

*marry up*

Marry.

*marsh pink*

A lovely little flower common to bogs and moist soil. This herb is a good tonic and is said to have been used in the old days as a substitute for quinine.

*martin*

A grayish black brave little bird that is noted for his tenacity in attacking crows, hawks or any large bird and driving them away from the farmhouse. The martin is pretty much disappearing in the Valley. Last Sunday I was out driving and I saw one fly across the road. This was the first martin I



had seen in years.

*can't do nothing till Martin comes*

This is a proverbial saying in the Valley, and as a little boy I was told how it got started. You'll often hear around a sawmill or any job where men are lolling about waiting for the boss-man to come or waiting for supplies — hear someone say, "Can't do nothing till Martin comes."

The old story ran as follows. Massa Landlord bet one of his slaves five dollars that he wouldn't dare stay in an old empty cabin down by the river which was supposed to be ha'nted. This Negro was a preacher and sort of a holy fellow and said he was not skeered of anything above the earth, on the earth, or below the earth. He said he would take up his master on the bet and win this five dollars.

So one night the reverend got his Bible and went to spend the night in the haunted cabin. He built himself a fire and took out his Bible and sat there reading it. While he was reading he heard a little wind blowing in the trees outside. He listened an instant and then went on with his reading. "For verily sayeth the Lord — " At this moment the old door creaked on its hinges, opening a bit, and in came a great black cat. The preacher looked at the cat and said nothing. The cat went over to the fireplace, stuck his head in, got a mouthful of coals, chewed them a bit and spat out the sparks, and then went over to the side of the hearth and sat down and looked at the preacher in silence. The preacher began reading away again. Presently the door squeaked once more and in came another cat, much bigger than the first, big as a dog. This cat likewise went over to the fireplace, stuck his head in, got a great mouthful of red-hot coals, chewed them and spat out the sparks, swallowed the coals and went over and sat down by the first cat. The preacher began to shake and shiver but he went on reading his Bible. "Verily in my father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you." The old door squeaked again and in came a third great black cat, this time he was as big as a small calf. He went over, stuck his head in the fireplace, got a great mouthful of red-hot coals, chewed them, spat out the sparks, swallowed the coals and then took his place by the other two cats. The first cat says to the second cat, "We can't do nothing." The second cat looked at the third cat and said, "No, we can't do nothing yet," and then the third great cat let out in a great big bass voice, "Can't do nothing till Martin comes." The preacher slammed his Bible into his pocket and said, "Well, you gentlemen tell Martin when he comes that I done been called away," and with that he plunged through the open window carrying the sash with him and disappeared into the night.

The story never told any further as to what Martin looked like or whether he arrived.

*martin-gourd*

We used to see on every farm a tall pole with cross arms from which gourds were hanging, with an opening cut in each gourd. These were called martin-gourds and the martins used to build nests in them and so help keep watch over the house, driving hawks away especially so that the farmers' chickens could thrive in peace.

*Mary* had a little lamb,  
Its fleece was white as snow,  
And everywhere that Mary went  
The lamb was sure to go.

It followed her to school one day,  
Which was against the rule.  
It made the children laugh and play  
To see a lamb at school.  
(Popular nursery rhyme.)

*Mary, Mary*, quite contrary,  
How does your garden grow?  
With silver bells and cockle shells  
And pretty girls all in a row.  
(Nursery rhyme.)

*mash*

Push, press. "Mash the doorbell, please."

Marsh.

*mashing*

Dandified or sentimental flirtation.

*mash-tub*

A tub in which the mash for making liquor was fermented.

*Mason's first pin*

Safety pin.

*Massacre of Piney Bottom*

One of those wasteful and human-inhumane acts of wartime. The story of Piney Bottom still lives among the old folks in the Valley. My friend and Valley historian Malcolm Fowler put it thus in his book *They Passed This Way*: "When Cornwallis moved through upper South Carolina and into North Carolina on his way to Guilford County Courthouse, many patriots in his path fled with their families to refuge with friends on the Neuse River. Among them were Capt. Culp of South Carolina and Col. Wade of Anson.

"After the British had left Wilmington for Yorktown and Greene had

marched back to South Carolina, Culp and Wade started back home with their families and several friends.

"They crossed the Cape Fear at Sprowl's Ferry (McNeill's) and camped for the night on Anderson Creek. During the night one of their party stole a piece of cloth from an orphan girl named Marion McDaniel. It was just a coarse piece of cloth but to the girl it meant a dress to wear to the kirk at Barbecue.

"This theft was the spark that touched off the powder keg. John McNeill, another of Archie's and Jennie Bahn's (sic) sons, seems to have been the principal leader. For it was he who dispatched messengers to the various Tory hangouts during the day following the theft of the cloth. But McNeill found it convenient to spend the afternoon at Col. Folsome's, leaving there just at sundown.

"From Folsome's to Piney Bottom was a matter of over forty miles. But John McNeill was riding with Col. McDougald when they struck the Whig encampment at three o'clock in the morning. Several of Culp's party were killed, including a young boy whose head was slit open by one of the attackers. Culp, Wade and several more escaped and rode for help while the Tories plundered the wagons before setting them afire and leaving.

"Culp and Wade returned to Cumberland County with 100 men and began a program of senseless bloodshed without parallel in the Valley. Not even Fanning could match them in brutality.

"It is interesting to speculate what would have happened had Fanning been available at this time. But he was in the Deep River country recovering from wounds received in the Cane Creek Battle.

"Before they satisfied their lust for blood, Culp and Wade had murdered at least eight men, besides robbing many more and burning a number of homes. Oddly enough, Culp and Wade stayed out of Harnett during this raid of revenge, confining their operations to what is now Moore and Hoke territory. Maybe they were hesitant to tackle the Tory big wheels.

"Right after this raid, Culp himself was murdered.

"After the war, Colonel Wade had John McNeill tried for his life for his part in the affair at Piney Bottom. However, McNeill put Colonel Folsome on the stand and proved he was at Folsome's home until sundown.

"The jury promptly returned a not guilty verdict. It was impossible, they said, for a man to ride from Folsome's to Piney Bottom in the time stated. From then on McNeill was called 'Cunning John.'

"But John McNeill did make that ride. He practically had lived in a saddle all his life. Arch McDougald and John's brother Daniel knew he made it; they were at Piney Bottom with him. But they were in Nova Scotia when John was tried. McDougald returned in later years. He is buried at Cameron's Hill, near the present village of Spout Springs.

"Marion McDaniel knew McNeill made the ride, but she wasn't called

as a witness. McNeill returned her piece of stolen cloth the day following the Piney Bottom incident. Now she could have her dress. It should have been a thing of wonder too. Fifteen men died on account of it!"

*"Massa's in de Cold, Cold Ground"*

Another of Stephen Foster's heart-touching darkey songs. It used to be a favorite with our barbershop quartet, as it was and still is everywhere. Many would-be authorities have claimed that this song was written as a memorial to the composer's dead father. This is wrong. The song was written in 1852. William Foster died in 1855. It seems obvious that Foster had in mind an imaginary and benign "Old Massa," and accordingly it would naturally follow that the massa's slaves grieved after him.

"Round de meadows am a-ringing  
De darkeys' mournful song  
While de mockingbird am singing  
Happy as de day am long.  
Where de ivy am a-creeping  
On de grassy mound.  
Dere old massa am a-sleeping  
Sleeping in de cold, cold ground."

Chorus: "Down in de cornfield  
Hear dat mournful sound.  
All de darkeys am a-weeping.  
Massa's in de cold, cold ground."

*massy*

Mercy. "Lord-a-massy child, what are you doing with that snake in your hand?"

*mast*

The seeds of pine or beech and other trees.

Like *master*, like man.

Every man is *master* in his own house.

An early *master* makes a long servant.

A falling *master* makes a standing man.

He who is *master* of himself will master others.

We cannot all be *masters*.

No man can serve two *masters*.

*match*

A well-suited pair, bride and groom, or two horses or two mules.

Don't blow out the *match* before you've lighted the candle.

Lighting three cigarettes on one *match* is unlucky.

*matching pennies*

See "crack a loo."

*'maters*

Tomatoes.

*matrimony vine*

The climbing nightshade.

*matter*

Discharge showing in the corner of the eye, also pus in a sore. "There's a lot of matter in that bone felon that ought to be cleaned out."

Wrong, unfitting. "Something's the matter with the doorbell, it won't ring."

more *matter* with less art

*Matthew*, Mark, Luke and John,  
Bless the bed that I lie on —  
Four corners to my bed,  
Four angels 'round my head,  
One at my head and one at my feet  
To guard my soul while I'm asleep.  
(A prayer rhyme.)

*Matthew*, Mark, Luke and John,  
God bless this bed that I lie on.  
If anything appear to me,  
Sweet Christ, arise and comfort me.  
(A child's prayer rhyme.)

*Matthew*, Mark, Luke and John,  
Saddle the cat and I'll be gone.  
(A smarty rhyme.)

*mattress-jig*

Lovemaking in bed.

*maul*

A homemade wooden farm implement which was used in the old days to hammer the steel wedges and gluts (q.v.) for splitting timbers and rails. These mauls usually were made from dogwood trees. A proper tree about six to

ten inches in diameter at the root would be chosen and dug up. The rooty end of the tree would be the maul head, to be rounded and shaped like a cylinder. Then some ten or twelve inches up the trunk of the tree an incision would be made. This would be girdled and this part of the tree chopped away until a rounded handle would be left. The handle would be three to four feet long, and with this heavy huge wooden hammer a man could really maul a day's work. I heard of one powerful Negro in the Valley who it was said could maul, or split, a thousand rails a day. Clinton McNeill, another hard-working Negro who could put up a brick chimney in a day, told me that he once mauled 1500 rails in one day.

*may apple*

A big-leaved, low-growing plant common in the Valley. It has an evil-smelling white bloom which produces one "apple" about the size of a large bullace or musket ball. Sometimes the plant was called wild lemon, or mandrake. It was used as a cathartic and also for numerous diseases like most every plant in the Valley.

*maypop*

The passion flower. It bears a soft pulpy fruit about the size of an egg. When it is well-ripened and yellow, the pulpy watery insides are sweet to the taste and good for eating as we children proved with many a tight bellyful. It has a big flat purple bloom, and in the center is the "Trinity" and around that "the Twelve Apostles." Go out into the fields in May or June and see for yourself in studying the bloom. Hence, its name. The juice squeezed from the leaves and dried made a good medicine for croup and children's pains. A poultice made of warm leaves was also good for neuralgia and the toothache.

*maypop war*

We boys used to have great fun especially on Sundays when we'd slip away from the old folks and go far down in the corn fields where the maypops, after the crops were laid by, were growing all over the ground with their oblong pods of fruit. We would gather these maypops and organize ourselves in opposing parties and go to it, throwing these at one another. As a boy I visited some friends up near Kipling, and these boys made fun of us who played war with maypops. They played war with rocks. I got in the war with them and the first thing I knew a big rock had laid me out pretty cold when it hit me on the side of the head. From then on my admiration for the Kipling boys was unbounded.

*mazuma*

Money.

### *Reverend Hugh McAden*

An early Presbyterian minister who came down from Pennsylvania into the Valley in 1755, seeking souls to save. And from records of the times there were plenty living in a lost condition and in need of salvation. He kept a journal of his travels and preaching, and many of his entries attest to that fact. For instance, on January 29, 1756, he wrote — “Preached to a small congregation, mostly Highlanders, at Alexander McKay’s up the Yadkin Road, who were much obliged to me for coming and highly pleased with my discourse. Though, alas, I am afraid it was all but feigned and hypocritical, for they stayed around the house all night drinking and carousing.”

McAden has been called the father of Presbyterianism in North Carolina.

### *Colonel Alexander McAllister*

One of the earliest Scotch pioneers in the Valley. He came over in 1729 to spy out the country and a few years later he led a large group of his countrymen to this “the promised land” or, as he put it, “the best poor man’s country on earth.” When the Revolutionary War came on, he took the Patriot side against a majority of his neighbors and kinsmen. Appointed lieutenant colonel in the Cumberland militia by the State Congress (legislature), he was active in rallying people to his cause. He is buried in Old Bluff churchyard, and I claim him as a forebear. In fact I was inducted into the SAR along with Frank Graham, by way of him. A massive chunk of granite was set in the Bluff Churchyard several years ago to honor Colonel McAllister. Its attached bronze plate says that he “was buried near this spot” and then lists him as follows — “Colonel of Cumberland County Militia, Justice of the Peace of Cumberland County, member of the N.C. Provincial Congress, member of the N.C. Committee of Public Safety, Elder of Bluff Presbyterian Church.”

### *Archibald McBride*

An early 19th century educator whose collected papers have served as a source for much of the early history of the Cape Fear Valley, notably the work of Caruthers.

### *Steve McDaniel*

He was supposed to be the laziest man that ever lived in our neighborhood, or any neighborhood for that matter, even lazier than the trifling Negro Big John (q.v.). One day Mr. Mac and I were poking around in the old Tirzah Churchyard looking at tombstones and their various epitaphs and copying one or two now and then. We came to a little squat field stone with the name Steve McDaniel on it. We stopped as Mr. Mac stared down at it.

“Steve died when I was a boy,” he said, “but I remember him all right.

He was the talk of the neighborhood because of his triflingness and the way he stayed in bed all the time, claiming he was too sick to be up and about, though, as I say, most of the people really believed he was shamming. I mean they sort of believed it, for all the time the better-hearted women in the neighborhood like Miss Callie Senter toted food to him. Zack Broadhuss, a powerful fun-loving strong man, decided he'd test old Steve. He hid behind his house one winter night, set an armful of hay afire and hollered 'Fire, fire! the house is a-burning!' Steve came tearing out into the cold air in his nightgown and run off down in the orchard. The ground was hard frozen, and by the time he'd caught on to the false alarm and the fact he'd been tricked and got back into the house, his feet were half frostbit. He hopped right back into bed. And this time he was struck with the palsy worse than ever. A lot of folks thought he was pretending like before. But he wasn't. In a week he was dead, and my daddy and the neighbors brung him here in a pine coffin box and buried him. Yes, that's right."

### *McGregor*

A prideful Scotch Valley name. There's an old saying, "where McGregor sits is the head of the table."

One "Neck" McGregor used to quote this old saying to me as having special reference not only to his family and forebears but to him himself. Mr. Mac said he knew Neck a long while before he died. He got his nickname from Civil War times, said Mr. Mac. "One day in 1865 Sherman's Yankee bummers rushed up to his farm on Rockfish Creek and captured him. He wouldn't tell where his horses and silverware were hid, so they hung him up by the neck the way they later did our poet Miller. Then they cut him down alive, and still he wouldn't tell. Later on some more of Sherman's bummers come by and hung him again but he wouldn't tell. Maybe he couldn't tell. Maybe he didn't have any silverware by this time for it all had gone into the southern cause, he being a mighty patriotic fellow. Finally a third gang of Yankee guerrillas came by and hung him a third time and that nigh 'bout ended him. They left him for dead, but some of the neighbors arrived in time to cut him down and revive him. From that day on though he walked with a crooked neck and with his head turned slanchindicular. So about all he got out of working for the Confederate cause was a maiming for life and the nickname "Neck." That name fitted him right on up to the end. One day on his way to MacDonald's Mill he met a few old Confederate soldiers coming around the bend on horses. They were on their way to Fayetteville for a reunion and were carrying a Confederate flag held high and proud before them. The flag flapping in the wind and the troops coming around the curve so sudden-like scared Neck's mules, and they ran away with him, throwing him out of the wagon and on his head and killing him. This time his neck was really broken."



*Rev. John McLeod*

A young 18th century clergyman who preached for a while at old Barbecue Church where Flora MacDonald and her husband and others of the clan worshipped. It was his wont to preach a sermon both in Gaelic and English, for some of his congregation knew one language better than the other. When the Revolutionary War came on, the Gaelic and English groups split and on one occasion, according to what Mr. Mac told me, they fell to fighting and there was quite a bloody to-do which spilled out into the Barbecue churchyard. Young McLeod took the Tory side and he, with the MacDonalds and many of their neighbors, was driven from the Valley to find refuge in Canada or to return desolate and destitute to Scotland.

*Colonel A.S. McNeill*

A tough and determined builder and businessman. He and his associates got caught in the canalizing fever of the early 19th century and set out to tame the Cape Fear River below the fall line. A company was formed, capital raised, Italian and Irish labor hired, and the enterprise was under way. But down below the present town of Lillington the diggers and blasters ran into a ledge of white flint rock and, strive with might and main and all the power of gunpowder as they would, they failed to break through this ridge. The company finally went bankrupt and in time Colonel McNeill died. He left instructions that a boulder of this flint rock which had been dislodged should be set as a tombstone at the head of his grave. Since he couldn't whip it in life, he would see to it that the "domned tough stuff" would honor him in death. And there he sleeps in old Tirzah churchyard on the ridge just west of Lillington with this boulder at his head. You can see it with its slowly fading inscription "Col. McNeill, died September 6, 1876." The date of his birth is not decipherable.

*Hector McNeill*

An 18th century Gaelic poet who lived in Robeson County and sang the praises of the Valley in verses sent back to his waiting kinsmen in Scotland. He has become a figure more legendary than factual so far as any extant sample of his poetry is concerned. I have searched and written here and yon to find some of his verses but so far I have not succeeded. In Scotland too I once searched but with no luck.

*Janet McAllister McNeill*

The romantic daughter of the fiery old Scotchman, Colonel Alexander McAllister. The colonel was one of the leading patriots of the Valley and as zealous in his family affairs as in those of the colony. I have one of the ancient letters in which he tells of Janet's runaway marriage, and that as long as she stayed well he hoped not to look upon her face again. He disinherited her for marrying Malcolm McNeill who, he wrote, was much

beneath him and her since he was tainted with Toryism. I have one of the piteous letters written to her father in May 1771 which because of its contemporary spelling is even more piteous. Part of it ran as follows: "Honored father — it is no longer in my power to Consele the gref of mind that I have fealt Seance I committed so ondutiful a crime as I shale Ever Call it — and that which hath aded to my greff the seeing of you twice or thre times with your Ever takeing the Lest notis of me which has allmost broke my hart. . ."

I have never been able to learn whether her father ever made up their quarrel or not. Anyway she lived on with Malcolm, made him a good wife and bore him seven children. He later drifted away from her and the children, moved farther west into the sandhills country and became the first sheriff of Moore County.

Janet lies buried alone in old Tirzah churchyard with a sturdy waist-high headstone which says, "In memory of Janet McNeill, relict of Malcolm McNeill, who departed this life April 25th, 1832, aged 75 years."

### *Jennie Ban McNeill*

A real and yet semi-legendary character in the Valley. The word ban means fair as opposed to dark or brunette. This Jennie Ban was redheaded. She and her husband Archibald, called "Scrubblin' Archie" (q.v.), accumulated great holdings of land as well as cattle. The story is handed down that Jennie Ban herself used to drive her cattle north to the market in Virginia, and once she went on to Philadelphia to buy things for the house on Little River. There at a party she met Benjamin Franklin and a friendship grew up between them. He gave her some kind of a locket which the historian Mr. Mac says he once saw as a boy, but it's been lost since then. They say she and Franklin corresponded for years, but I have never been able to find any of the correspondence. Long before she and Franklin met, Franklin's partner Hugh Meredith had sold his share of the printing business to Franklin and came down into the Valley to explore round and about. He wrote a piece in praise of the land which was published in a little book, *An Account of the Cape Fear Valley*, which is in the University Library at Chapel Hill.

According to tradition, Jennie Ban was a wily woman in more ways than land trade. Tradition tells that in the Revolution she bet on both sides, and three of her sons became Tories and three Whigs. One of them, the Tory John McNeill, helped massacre Colonel Wade's band of Whigs. (See "Massacre of Piney Bottom.") One of her sons was the same Malcolm who despite rumors of Toryism fought on the side of the Whigs and married Colonel Alexander McAllister's daughter Janet (q.v.). Jennie Ban lies buried there in the old family graveyard near Little River. I was there recently with a group of local historians, and Malcolm Fowler gave one of his interesting talks about the McNeill family and about the mansize obelisk marking the

grave. "This tombstone is only the top part of the monument," said Malcolm. "The total monument was brought up from Wilmington on a flatboat and during the unloading the heavy base of it fell into the river. Folks couldn't get it out and so brought on to the graveyard here only the top part." Someone in the group asked if the base was still in the Cape Fear River. "No," said Malcolm, "some years ago they got it out with a crane, cut it up and the pieces of it were used in the bank building there in Fayetteville. I don't remember the name of the bank, but anyone who wants to can find out and can go and see it." So he said.

### *Cunning John McNeill*

Son of Jennie Ban and "Scrubblin' Archie." See "Massacre of Piney Bottom."

### *John Charles McNeill*

The beloved of Valley poets. When I was a high school student, I fell in love with his poetry, learned reams of it by heart and wrote literally thousands of verses under his spell. I used to plough in the fields reciting him joyously furrow after furrow under the hanging-down, suffocating, relentless sky. How beautiful to me were such stanzas as these from his poem "October":

"The thought of old, dear things is in thine eyes,  
O, month of memories!  
Musing on days thine heart hath sorrow of,  
Old joy, dead hope, dear love,

"I see thee stand where all thy sisters meet  
To cast down at thy feet  
The garnered largess of the fruitful year,  
And on thy cheek a tear.

"Thy glory flames in every blade and leaf  
To blind the eyes of grief;  
Thy vineyards and thine orchards bend with fruit  
That sorrow may be mute."

And so for eight more stanzas — pouring out his feeling about this lovely fecund month, and all under the spell of Keats' "Ode to Autumn," and with a great weakening of beauty, just as my poor verses were a weakening of his, McNeill's. Recently we local historians held a meeting of honor at McNeill's grave there by the road near Laurinburg. I was surprised and pleased to see how many of the historians could recite long stretches of poetry from McNeill's two books, his *Songs Merry and Sad*, and *Lyrics From Cotton Land*.

In 1977, Richard Walser, a beloved teacher of English at North Carolina State University and indefatigable anthologist, published a third collection

of McNeill's poetry — *Possums and Persimmons*, — chosen from the "Charlotte Observer" files, "Wake Forest Student" and "Century Magazine."

### *Phil McNeill*

A valley hermit. When William Jennings Bryan was running for president, Phil vowed an oath he would never cut his beard or shave until Bryan was elected. Year after year went by and Phil's beard grew longer and longer as Bryan kept being defeated. Phil was a sensitive fellow, and his long beard began to embarrass him and he appeared less and less in public. (This was long before the present age of hairy heads and faces, of sloppy shoes and patched jeans.) Finally he moved far out in the sand barrens in western Harnett County and put up as a hermit in a little shack, eking some sort of a poor living out of a sandy hillside. I visited him in his old age. The side road leading to his shack had grown up in blackjack, sassafras and dogwood bushes, and I had to park my Ford and get on through the briars and thickets as best I could. Phil met me in front of his shack — bleary-eyed and incredibly dirty. We sat down under an oak tree and he began reciting Burns' poetry. "John Barley Corn is dead," he sang up toward the branches of the sheltering oak. Later he showed me his sleeping place — a pallet on the floor of a little log smokehouse. His dwelling — a somewhat better building — was locked up. He had for a pillow in the smokehouse a single piece of oak log with an old coat thrown over it. The pallet was placed in front of the fireplace, and the fireplace was open to the weather at the back, for the stick-and-dirt chimney had fallen down.

"I don't sleep in that there house," he said pointing to the dwelling off a few yards. "The ha'nts run about so that I can't sleep, so a year or two ago I moved out here in the cookhouse."

"What sort of ha'nts, Mr. McNeill?"

"Oh, I don't know — just ha'nts. At night you could hear 'em running just like big rats. I couldn't stand it. So I come out here."

"You sleep pretty well here?" and I gestured.

"No, I don't sleep much a-tall. Old Anarchy bothers me so."

"Anarchy?"

"Yeh, between old Anarchy and the ha'nts I have been having a tough time. Let me show you." He stood suddenly up and dropped his dirty trousers down and there was his hip all raw and festered — a terrible sight.

"Good gracious, Mr. Phil, how in the world did that happen?" I cried.

"Like I told you," he said looking down at the spectacle coldly and peeringly, "Anarchy." And he went on. "About a week ago while I was lying asleep — I usually keep a little bit of fire going in the fireplace to keep me warm — old Anarchy crept up outside the house, reached in and put a handful of fiery punk inside my britches. When I woke up I was all afire

and the side of my hip was burnt clean off.”

“I’m going to get you to a doctor,” I declared.

“Nuh-uh, you ain’t either,” he answered stoutly, and he jerked his trousers up, buttoned their one front button, and hooked his old greasy belt tight again. Then staring off he broke into another recitation. — “ ‘My luve is like a red red rose so early sprung in June.’

“I got to go back to chopping my corn,” he said abruptly and turned. He limped swiftly away picking up an old worn-out hoe lying on a log as he went. I stood looking after him.

“My corn needs chopping bad,” he called back, and on he went into a scattering of little pine trees and there began to chop. I noticed some feeble little stalks of corn here and there which he had planted among the pines.

I turned away and mournful were my thoughts as I walked back to my Ford. No one knows in this world what may happen to his mind, I thought to myself. Let me pray mercy of the mute air and the turning earth and the reaching universe that I may escape such a fate — and that mercy might still come to Phil McNeill.

But mercy did not come. During the winter a heavy snow fell in the sand barrens and the county dirt roads were shut off for a week or two. I kept thinking about the hermit of Harnett and when the snow melted I went off to inquire. Phil McNeill was already dead. A distant neighbor seeing buzzards roosting on top of his house, cold as it was, had gone to inquire and found him lying stiff and stark in his cookhouse with his head on his wooden log. Old Anarchy would bother him no more.

### *Red McNeill*

He was called Red Giant McNeill and lived at the now perished town of Aversboro. Many tales have been handed down about this Scotsman. According to my friend John A. Oates, the learned Fayetteville historian, Red McNeill along with hundreds and thousands of other Scotsmen had migrated to the Valley. Red settled near what is now Smiley’s Falls. Scarlet fever broke out among the Scotsmen, a fever they were unacquainted with, and Red McNeill was laid low by it. His friend Archie Buie — a family name for which Buie’s Creek is named — made him a coffin out of a huge gum log and lid-fastened with wooden pegs. According to Oates, Reverend James Campbell (q.v.) went to see the dying man. “The old Scotchman said to him ‘Ye are welcome as a friend, dominie, but I want none o’yer paulin’ prayers or yer religious cantin’. I ha’e ne’er called on Him when I was strong and I’ll be dom’d if I go whimperin’ like a coward to Him now!’ The preacher offered a prayer in Gaelic and went away. Little Archie,” says Oates, “had promised to take the body of Red McNeill across the river and bury it but the waters were too high. They dug a grave on the east bank, and tradition tells us that little Archie Buie played with his bagpipe McNeill’s Lament:

“ ‘Here lie I, Red McNeill;  
Have mercy on my soul, Lord God,  
As I would do were I Lord God  
An ye were Red McNeill.’ ”

Later another great freshet overflowed the river and washed up Red's gum coffin and all out of the grave. Only the gum coffin was ever found and it along with Red's giant bones has been forgot.

*Scrubblin' Archie McNeill*

Husband of Jennie Ban. According to Wright's *Dialect Dictionary*, scrubblin' means dirty, low, inferior, hardworking. Which of these adjectives fitted Archie, I don't know. Malcolm Fowler says he thinks it refers to Archie's small size. I haven't been able to find out but, anyway, all of our local historians agree that Archie was tied to a most remarkable woman, even something of a hellcat, in his redheaded partner Jennie. He lies by Jennie's side, quiet and subdued as in life, there in the thicket overgrown McNeill cemetery on Little River.

*meadow beauty*

A charming little flower, as beautiful as its name, much like a scarlet evening primrose if there were such a thing. The leaves have a sweetish acid taste and are tasty to deer. Therefore, sometimes this meadow beauty is called deer grass although it is not a grass at all.

*meadow muffins*

Cow pies, cow dung.

*meadow parsnip*

This plant grows in the upland woods as well as along the river flood plains. It is mainly found in the Piedmont and the mountains but there is enough of it in the Valley to make itself noticed. A tincture of this plant used to be used as a nerve irritant and also in the treatment of syphilis. Tea drunk from it makes a person sweat profusely.

*meadow rue*

This plant is of the crowfoot family and has a graceful drooping foliage and small white flowers which appear in April or May. The roots of the plant have been used as a purgative and also for sciatica and snakebites. It is supposed to be poisonous to stock for it contains an alkaloid.

*meal bag*

Food. "Come on you folks, put on the meal bag."

*meal barrel*

The source of supply, the welfare board.

Taking out of the *meal barrel* and never putting in is the way to the poorhouse.

Scraping in the bottom of the *meal barrel* makes mighty poor music.

*meal ticket*

A wage earner, one who pays the bill. "He's my meal ticket and so I treat him like sweet papa."

*mean* as all get out

*mean* as a snake

*mean* as he (she, it) can be

*mean* as Old Scratch

*mean* as pizen (poison)

*mean* as Satan

*mean* as the devil

*mean* as they make 'em

*Me and my wife* and a bobtailed dog  
Crossed the river on a hickory log.  
The log did break and she fell in.  
So I lost my wife and bottle of gin.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

*measly*

Cheap, small, no good. "A few measly bushels of corn he had — no more."

If you *measure* a baby for his size,  
A coffin soon will cover his eyes.  
(A proverb rhyme.)

*measuring worm*

A small caterpillar which, if found crawling on a person's clothes, shows that he, the worm, is measuring the person for a coffin or a shroud. One day when someone pointed in alarm to a measuring worm crawling on Lily Wilder's dress, Lily gave her wild laugh and said, "It's bad luck to kill him and I can tell you he ain't measuring me for a coffin, he's measuring me for a new dress." But maybe the worm really was at his funereal business, for a year later light-hearted Lily died of typhoid fever.

One man's *meat* is another man's poison.

*meat auger*

A nonexistent tool, an April fool item. "Bud, run across to Mr. Tysinger's

and borrow his meat auger for me. I need it bad to bore my hams.”

*medicine*

Penalty, punishment. “Well, the only thing that a defeated politician can do is to take his medicine.”

There is no *medicine* against death.

*me either (me neither)*

A self-inclusive phrase of agreement. “I don’t like that fellow and never have.” “Me either.”

*meek* as a lamb

*meek* as a mouse

*meek* as Moses

*Meet the King and Queen*

A practical joke game. We used to have a lot of fun playing this in the parlors on Sunday evenings. Some person who didn’t know the game would be the gull. Three chairs would be set in a row, two facing outward and the other one facing backward. These would be covered with a sheet or blanket and the king and the queen would sit side by side on the two chairs facing forward with the blanket stretched between them. The leader would go to the door and ask the gull if he wanted to meet the king and queen. The answer was always yes. He was led before the king and queen, who in unison would repeat his name and say, “We are glad to meet you.” The recipient of the joke would then be asked to sit down between them. He would turn and take his place and as he sat down, they would rise and down he would go, usually into a pan or tub of water hidden under the blanket. Then squeals of laughter and hopping up and down with joy. Sometimes the recipient of this joke got mad indeed and it would be difficult to make peace.

*meet up with*

To meet by chance, unexpectedly, to fall in with.

*mell of a hess*

A hell of a mess.

*mellow*

To beat, to pummel. “Just mess with me, Bo, and I’ll mellow your head.”

*mellow bug*

A water bug which has a strong scent when crushed.

*melt*

The spleen, often pronounced “milt.”



He looked so holy that butter wouldn't *melt* in his mouth.

*member*

The penis.

*me, myself and I*

A jocular phrase for emphasis.

*Men* are old as they feel and women as they look.

*Men* are sorry witnesses in their own cause.

Fat *men* are jolly.

Old *men* are twice children.

One-legged *men* better dance away from the fire.

All *men* can't be masters.

Wise *men* learn by other men's mistakes.

When all *men* speak, no one hears.

*Mend* your manners and your manners will mend you.

Truly *mending* saves much spending.

*mend one's fences*

To look after one's neglected business, to make political hay, reconciliation of a quarrel.

*don't mention it*

A cursory polite phrase, as don't bother, never mind, thank you just the same, and so on.

*meracle*

Miracle.

*merchants of death*

Munition makers and sellers.

*mercury*

The old cure for syphilis. I've seen more than one man at church or at court or at picnic gatherings all stumbling and shaking and one arm half-dangling because of this terrible disease. Mercury was supposed to be very effective for a normal case of the disease but when the nervous system was affected, the case was pretty much hopeless. The following crack is cynical enough and of little comfort. "One night with Venus and three years with mercury."

*mergins*

See “murgins.”

*mermaid point*

A point of land below the old perished town of Haywood where the Deep River meets the Haw River. It is said that in the days long gone mermaids, tired of the Atlantic, would swim up the Cape Fear River and battle their way through Smiley’s Falls above Erwin. According to Mr. John A. Oates, the Fayetteville historian, they would finally get over the Great Falls at Buckhorn and relax on the white sands of the point. Malcolm Fowler, another Valley historian, says he thinks the story got started because of some huge garfish that used to leap and bounce in the water, and people half-seeing them created the story.

as *merry* as a cricket

as *merry* as birds

*merrygold*

Marigold.

*merry legs*

A harlotry girl.

*merry widow*

Condom, birth control rubber.

*mess*

A harum-scarum person, jocularly used. “Ain’t that Jenny Jones a mess!”

Enough for the meal. “He got a mess of turnips for dinner.”

*mess about (around)*

To fool away time, to loaf.

*Messiah*

The Savior of the world. According to the Jews, the world still awaits his coming. The Christians believe he has already come and been crucified for their sins.

*Methodists*

The religious sect that has the true method, or claims it has, for man’s happy dwelling on this earth and his soul’s salvation in the hereafter. Next to the Holy Roller and Jehovah’s Witnesses, it is perhaps our most emotional church. Its revivals or protracted meetings, as they are often called, are well known for the amount of shouting that takes place. The shouters are usually women. At old Pleasant Plains near Buie’s Creek, I as a boy saw and heard a lot of shouting women moving up and down the aisles clapping their hands

and now and then mingling shrieks with their shouts. And all the while their faces were ecstatically lighted up, and the "map of Canaan" was shining there.

### *Methuselah*

The famous character in the Bible who was supposed to have lived 969 years. Methuselah has been a very vivid personality in Negro folklore, especially in Negro spirituals.

### *middling*

Sidemeat, bacon. The middle part of the hog between the ham and the shoulder.

Mediocre, fairly well, pretty good. "How're you feeling?" "Just middling, just middling." or "fair to middling."

### *middy blouse*

A young girl's blouse fashionable back in the teens and twenties but now pretty much forgotten.

*Might* is not right.

*Might* makes right.

### *with might and main*

With all one's strength.

### *might can do*

May be able to, same as may can do.

### *might could*

Perhaps could.

### *might nigh (mighty nigh)*

Almost, near to. "When Mary Lou married that other fellow, John's heart was might nigh broke."

### *mighty*

Very, much. "Not so mighty long ago." "He's a mighty sick man."

### *mighty much man*

Of great strength.

### *migration to Texas*

Before the Civil War and even after the Civil War there was a great movement of people out of the Valley toward Texas, especially a movement of young wildish fellows. If a youth got a girl in trouble or if he got into a cutting scrape, or even committed murder, he was up and off to Texas where he was always pretty much safe from the following and reaching arm of the law.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a *mile*, go with him twain.

*milk*

To quiz, to question extensively.

Don't cry over spilt *milk*.

*give down one's milk*

To pay a debt.

*Milking* a cow on the ground (without a bucket) will cause her to go dry.

*milk purslane*

A curse in many a garden. This much-branched radiating annual is as prolific as crabgrass and as common in all of the dry and sandy soils of the Valley. It has many names such as spotted eyebright, spotted spurge, spotted pusley, and according to a book I read, like many other plants, it is good for nearly everything under the sun medicinally — being “emetic, expectorant, cathartic, diaphoretic, astringent, rubefacient, blistering, stimulant and is used in dropsy and as a powerful external stimulant.” The Indians used this plant as a purgative.

*milk stage*

That condition of corn just before its maturing. The Indians especially liked corn in this stage.

*milk-suck*

Young, immature. “He was in the milk-suck age.”

*milkweed*

There are numerous kinds of milkweed in the Valley and all are noted for their juicy milky stalks and for their feathery seeds that blow easily in the wind. We children used to have more fun taking the blossoms and running in front of each other and blowing the downy stuff into one another's faces.

*go through the mill*

To have a tough experience, to be treated to a rough course of sprouts.

*miller's turn*

To have one's turn in being served. From the old custom of grinding grain for the farmers in order of their arrival. Same as first come, first served.

*millet*

A farm grain. There are about a dozen kinds. When my father and the rest of us got so tired of pulling fodder, the newly advertised millet seed was adopted with the hope that some of the hard labor of fodder pulling would be got rid of. For a while we tried it but with the difficulty of harvesting we decided to go back to fodder pulling. Fodder pulling now has passed

out entirely and hay, small grain and other substitute feeds have taken the place of the sweaty worked-out earlier feed. Here and there millet growing has reappeared and now that cattle are becoming profitable in the Valley, more and more corn silos are being built.

*million*

Melon.

The *mills* of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small.

A good *millstone* grinds; a poor one is ground.

A man with a passel of children has got a *millstone* about his neck.

It is better for him that a *millstone* were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea.

*mimick and momick*

To make a mess of things. "That new hired girl just mimicks and momicks."

*mince*

To split hairs, to be overly particular. "Quit mincing matters and come on with the truth."

*mind*

To intend. "I mind to get me a new Chevrolet as soon as I sell my tobacco crop."

To obey. "You children mind your mammy."

*Mind* your own business.

Be ye all of one *mind*.

*I'm a good mind to*

Inclined to take action or plan to.

*mindful*

Careful, obedient.

*Never mind!*

A command in the negative.

*mind out*

Be careful, watchful, take care. "Mind out or you'll cut yourself with that razor."

He who *minds* his own business has no time to mind other folks'.

The *minds* of great men run in the same channel.

*mind the store*

To be in charge, tend to business. "The old Jew was dying, and his relatives were gathered around. Suddenly he cried out, 'Who's minding the store?' "

What's *mine* is yours and what's yours is mine.

*minner mind*

To have a mind to. My Uncle Tom Green used to use this phrase all the time. Once I heard him say after he had failed to get a lazy tenant woman out of bed, "I minner mind to go down there and whup that old huzzy."

*miniskirt*

The recent abbreviated garment that in some cases looks like only a widened belt. This reminds me of an old rhyme which was popular in the flapper days.

" 'If the dresses get any shorter,'  
Said the flapper with a sob,  
'There'll be two more cheeks to powder  
And a lot more hair to bob.' "

*minny ball*

A type of conical rifle bullet invented by Captain C.E. Minie, a Frenchman, and much used in the Civil War. As a boy listening to old veterans tell of their Civil War doings, I always heard much mention of minny balls. My Uncle Dan Green was hit by six minny balls, so 'twas said, in the battle of Malvern Hill, yet lived. See "Ku Klux Klan" and "immaculate conception."

*mint*

There are quite a number of mints that grow in the Valley. The most common one of course is the garden mint which is used widely in iced tea and especially in the flavoring of mint juleps.

*mint of money*

A lot of money. "I hear tell Henry Spears has got a mint of money."

*in a pair of minutes*

Immediately, at once.

*mirate*

To wonder, to stand in amazement before.

*miration*

Amazement.

*mirror*

There are many old sayings connected with the mirror and of course many superstitions. For instance, breaking a mirror foretells seven years bad luck.

Hold the *mirror* up to nature.

The end of *mirth* is heaviness.

*the mischief!*

A mild interjection.

*mischeevous*

Mischievous, wild, proguing, untamed. "My cow is mischeevous as she can be — all the time breaking into the corn field."

*misery*

A pain or ache, especially rheumatic pains or arthritis. "I can't hardly travel, son, I got the misery in my back so bad."

*Misery* loves company.

*Misery* makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows.

*misfortune*

A bastard birth. "Did you hear about Mis' Mollie Betts — she's had a misfortune. A little woods colt was born on her last night."

Better be wise by the *misfortunes* of others than by your own.

*Misfortunes* never come singly.

*mishap*

To make a mess in one's trousers. Also a loss of virginity or a miscarriage.

*mish-mash*

A messy mixture, sloppy stuff.

*mislick*

A misdirected blow.

*mismeant*

A mistake, an error in judgment.

*misremember*

Fail to remember.

A *miss* is as good as a mile.

*missing link*

An extremely ugly person.

*miss one's guess*

To be mistaken, to be off in judgment. "That man's going broke or I miss my guess."

*Missouri*

The home of skeptics, of doubting Thomases. "I'm from Missouri, you'll have to show me."

*miss the boat (bus, train)*

To lose out, to fail an opportunity.

*Mist* in May and heat in June  
Makes the harvest come right soon.  
(A weather proverb.)

*mistletoe*

A romantic parasitic plant that grows mainly on oak trees. It is especially popular at Christmas time and young people, even old ones, hang up sprays of mistletoe about the house. When a person happens to be under one of these sprays, another person has the privilege of kissing him or her. The leaves of the mistletoe have been chewed to relieve toothache, and it is said that more than one person has died from eating the berries. I have never known of a case myself. Some of the old people used to put the leaves between the children's toes to cure ground itch.

*"The Mistletoe Bough"*

A heart-touching ballad.

Along with the piteous "In the Baggage Coach Ahead" and "The Fatal Wedding," my mother introduced us children to this song-story. I recently came across its words and music in Vance Randolph's *Organ Folksongs*.

"The mistletoe hung in the castle hall,  
The holly branch shone on the old oak wall.  
The baron's retainers were blithe and gay,  
Keeping the Christmas holiday.  
The baron beheld with a father's pride  
While she with her bright eyes seemed to be  
The star of that goodly company.  
Oh, the mistletoe bough!

" 'I'm weary of dancing now,' she cried,  
'Here tarry a moment, I'll hide, I'll hide,  
And, Lovell, be sure thou are the first to trace  
The clue to my secret lurking place.'  
Away she ran and her friends began  
Each tower to search and each nook to scan,  
And young Lovell cried, 'Oh where dost thou hide?  
I'm lonesome without thee, my own dear bride.'  
Oh, the mistletoe bough!



"They sought her that night, they sought her next day,  
 They sought her in vain when a week passed away.  
 In the highest, the lowest, the loneliest spot  
 Young Lovell sought wildly, but found her not.  
 And years flew by, and their grief at last  
 Was told as a sorrowful tale long past,  
 And when Lovell appeared the children cried,  
 'See the old man weeps for his fairy bride.'  
 Oh, the mistletoe bough!

"At length an oak chest that had long laid hid  
 Was found in the castle, they raised the lid  
 When a skeleton form lay moldering there  
 In the bridal wreath of that lady fair.  
 Oh sad was her fate, when in sportive jest  
 She hid from her lord in the old oak chest.  
 It closed with a spring and a dreadful doom,  
 And the bride lay clasped in a living tomb.  
 Oh, the mistletoe bough!"

*a mistook*

A mistake.

*give the mitten to*

To dismiss, to jilt.

*mixed blood (White-Negro)*

A "shameful mixture" and until recently to be condemned, and yet, until recently, too, mulattoes were considered in the Valley and elsewhere as naturally superior to the pure blacks. And now black as a color is being considered by the blacks as superior. Only recently I heard a local mulatto youth say he was shamed at school by being referred to as "old half and half." The laws in the Southern states and in most states of the Union prohibited the intermixing of white and Negro blood. If a person was one-eighth Negro, or in some states even less, this prohibition obtained. The U.S. Supreme Court is to be thanked for wiping out such laws.

Back in the Revolutionary War one of Cornwallis' soldiers had been wounded and left behind on the retreat from Guilford Courthouse to Wilmington. And he was cared for by a Negro girl and her mother. He fell in love with this girl but of course couldn't marry her. Through her nursing he recovered from his bad wounds and so was determined to stay with his newfound love. Some of the Valley folks threatened and were determined to drive him away. The girl fell sick from grieving. The doctor came and bled her into a pan. And what did the young soldier do? He picked up the

pan of blood and drank it. And then he took the girl by the hand and went before the Justice of the Peace and declared that he had Negro blood in him and the J.P. couldn't gainsay him. And so a license was finally issued and the two young people were married. They lived a happy life, and their descendants are among the best citizens in the Valley to this day. Of course, a lot of us know that some of them have Negro blood in them but we make no point of it.

*mix medicine*

Ability to cope with any situation. "That fellow knows how to mix his medicine all right."

*mixtry*

Mixture.

*mizzle*

Drizzle, a soft rain.

*mo*

A moment.

*moan* like a dove

The *mob* has many heads, but no brains.

*moccasin flower*

See "lady slipper."

*highland moccasin*

A deadly poisonous snake common throughout North Carolina.

Bad luck will come to you if you *mock* a crippled person.

*mockingbird*

To my way of thinking, the most famous bird in America, and if this mighty singer had been a native of England, think of the hundreds of wonderful poems that would have been written to it. He has the nightingale beat a mile. I remember long ago a fiddling tune I tried to play called "Listen to the Mockingbird" (q.v.).

*modesty*

A weed or flower from the mallow family. It is a pest to the farmer, sometimes called shoo fly.

*Mohammedan*

In the old days any foreigner. When I was a boy, a peddler named Joe Thomas used to come through our neighborhood, and everybody spoke of him as being Mohammedan, meaning a foreigner of a strange nationality. Actually he was a Syrian.

A *mole* on the neck  
Means money by the peck.  
(A folk belief rhyme.)

In contrast to this belief I used to hear the old saying that moles on the neck meant that a person would be hanged by the neck.

If a *mole's* foot is tied around a baby's neck, the baby will have no teething pains.

*Molly Cottontail*

The ordinary rabbit.

*mollygrubs*

Mulligrubs.

*momick*

To completely disarrange, to make a mess of.

*Monday* for wealth,  
Tuesday for health,  
Wednesday the best day of all,  
Thursday for losses,  
Friday for crosses,  
And Saturday no luck at all.  
(A proverb rhyme.)

I never learned what happened on Sunday. Since it was for resting and worship, I suppose there was no need to mention it.

*Monday's child* is fair of face,  
Tuesday's child is full of grace,  
Wednesday's child is merry and glad,  
Thursday's child is sorry and sad,  
Friday's child is loving and giving,  
Saturday's child works hard for a living,  
And the child that is born on the Sabbath Day  
Is blithe and bonny, good and gay.  
(A folk wisdom rhyme referring to day of birth.)

I have also heard:

Wednesday's child is full of woe,  
And Thursday's child has far to go.

Another version of this rhyme is:

Friday's child is full of sin,  
Saturday's child is pure within,

The child that is born on the Sabbath Day  
To Heaven its steps shall tend alway.

*Money* can do anything.

*Money* has more power than words.

*Money* is the root of all evil.

*Money* makes the mare go.

Any fool can make *money* but it takes a wise man to know how to spend it.

Put *money* in thy purse.

A little *money* is soon spent.

He would steal the *money* off a dead man's eyes.

If you would know the value of *money* try to borrow it.

*money bags*

A rich person, a skinflint.

*Money burns holes in one's pocket*

Usually spoken of a spendthrift.

*money crop*

The main crop of a farmer which can be disposed of for ready cash. Back in the Colonial days and up into the late 19th century tar, pitch and turpentine were the money crops. Then later cotton became the mainstay. Now today it is tobacco, but cattle and peanuts are creeping on up, and if the American people finally decide that cigarette smoking is as deadly as the surgeon general says it is and can act accordingly, tobacco will no longer be the prime crop in the Valley. Perhaps by that time soybeans or cattle or peanuts or truck farming will be the money crop.

*man for one's money*

A reliable person, a go-getter, a man "straight as a shingle."

*money from home*

Easy pickings, a windfall.

*money grubber*

A skinflint, a miser.

*Money Island*

A little island in Greenville Sound near Wilmington, N.C. Here Captain William Kidd, the notorious pirate, was said to have hidden his gold back in the late 17th century. Thus the island got its name. A multitude of passionate treasure seekers have overrun this island with their shovels

through the generations but no gold has ever been found.

This William Kidd was a Scotsman, born probably in Greenock about 1645, say the historians. He took to the sea at an early age and by the last decade of the century had become a sea captain and a ship owner in New York. In the war with France he placed his ship at the service of the crown and set forth against the French privateers. Richard Coote, Earl of Bellamont, was appointed Governor of Massachusetts and New York with instructions to suppress piracy. Kidd was commissioned to privateer against the French ships. The only pay he was to receive was to come from the prizes he took. He sailed to New York where he augmented his crew and made all ready. Then he set forth to Madagascar hunting for the French.

Before too long word got around that Kidd was not only taking enemy ships but that he was taking and robbing friendly ones as well. In time he was proclaimed a pirate and a price set on his head. He sailed his ship to America and came ashore at Boston. Protesting his innocence he defied the local court, declaring in his defense that he had been forced to piratical action by a mutinous crew and had yielded only to save his life. Nevertheless he was found guilty and sent back to England for punishment, and there in London he was hanged on May 9, 1701. His body stayed in the gibbet for two weeks or so as a warning to all and sundry to mend their ways.

Before the hanging, and even during that grisly ceremony, the usual Grub Street poet was busy hawking his ballad among the crowd. The ballad has come down to us with the tune popular at the time — a tune that is still with us in, say, that “damn your eyes” ballad of “Samuel Hall.” In the original Kidd is referred to as “Robert” instead of “William.”

“My name is Robert Kidd -  
As I sailed, as I sailed.  
My name is Robert Kidd  
As I sailed.

“My name is Robert Kidd  
And God's laws I did forbid  
And much wickedness I did,  
As I sailed, as I sailed,  
And much wickedness I did,  
As I sailed.

“My father taught me well,  
As I sailed, as I sailed,  
My father taught me well...  
For to shun the gates of hell,  
But yet I did rebel  
As I sailed.

“He put a Bible in my hand,  
As I sailed, as I sailed,  
He put a Bible in my hand...  
And I sunk it in the sand  
Long before I left the land,  
As I sailed, as I sailed.

“Now come, all ye young and old,  
As I sailed, as I sailed,  
Now come, all ye young and old,  
You are welcome to my gold...  
For it made me lose my soul,  
As I sailed.”

*money's worth*

Full value.

*money to burn*

A superfluity of money. “I’ve got money to burn but, brother, I don’t like to smell the smoke.”

*money vine*

See “moneywort.”

*put your money where your mouth is*

Let your money do the talking, usually a gambler’s command to make one’s bet, or an admonition to one who speaks strong opinions.

*moneywort*

Also called Creeping Jenny, a European perennial with bright yellow flowers usually found in damp places in lawns and fields. It has of late years become an ornamental plant.

*monish*

Admonish.

*The monkey and the coon*

Were playing in the grass.  
The coon stuck his finger  
Up the monkey’s ass.  
Don’t that looka like short’ning, short’ning,  
Don’t that looka like short’ning bread.  
(A vulgar jocular rhyme.)

*monkey glands*

A supposed restorer of manhood, etc. Thirty or forty years ago there was quite a rush among the male population to be operated on to receive these

glands. A certain Valley gentleman, so it was said, couldn't get monkey glands and used goat glands instead. Barney Cofield opined that "the doctors operated on the wrong place — they should have worked on his head."

*Monkey, monkey*, bottle of beer,  
How many monkeys have we here?  
One, two, three, out goes he  
Down to the bottom of the deep blue sea.  
(A counting out rhyme.)

### *monkey business*

Underhand dealing, scheming actions.

### *monkey riding*

In the old sweaty hard-working days in the Valley the "monkey" was a familiar fancied creature. If a person began to show signs of exhaustion from hard work, some wag would call out that the monkey was riding him. Often a big buck fellow would declare in his braggadocio strength, "Ain't no monkey can ride me!"

### *monkeyshine*

Wild and ugly behavior, a tantrum. "If you don't cut out that monkeyshine, boy, I'm gonna thrash you to a fare-you-well."

*Monkey* sitting on a pine tree rail  
Picking his teeth with the end of his tail.  
Mulberry leaves and calico sleeves,  
Old schoolteachers are hard to please.  
(A derisive rhyme.)

### *monkey suit*

Any kind of loud uniform such as worn by majordomos and doormen in front of fashionable hotels.

### *"The Monkey's Wedding"*

This was another merry nonsense song we used to sing while chopping cotton.

"The monkey married the baboon's sister,  
Gave her a ring and then he kissed her.  
He kissed so hard he raised a blister.  
She set up a yell.

"The bridesmaid stuck on some court plaster.  
It stuck on fast, it couldn't stick faster,  
Surely 'twas a sad disaster  
But it soon got well."

And so on through the wedding ceremony, the dinner to follow, and then

to the dancing.

“What do you think were the tunes they danced to?  
What were the figures they advanced to  
Up and down as they chanced to?  
Tails they were too long.

“ ‘Ducks in the Kitchen,’ ‘Old Aunt Sally,’  
‘Plain Cotillion,’ ‘Who Keeps Tally?’  
Up and down they charge and rally!  
Ended is my song.”

*monkshood*

A poisonous aconite, sometime called wolf bane or trailing monkshood. It grows in moist and shady places and has been used in the treatment of gout and rheumatism.

*monotheism*

The belief in one god as the creator, the all-knower, the all-mover, omniscient power, and the creator of all that is. Thus the actual reality of nature and man's place in it become of no real significance.

*month of Sundays*

An indefinite period but certainly a long time.

*moola*

Money, same as spondulicks, the long green, mazuma, etc.

The *moon* is made of green cheese.

A change in the *moon* brings a change in the weather.

Pale *moon* doth rain  
Red moon doth blow.  
White moon doth neither  
Rain nor snow.  
(Weather proverb.)

Look at the *moon* over your left shoulder and make a wish and it will come true.

Don't let the *moon* shine on your face when you're sleeping or it'll make you go crazy.

*moonack*

A wild fabulous creature that is supposed to live in the deep swamps of the Cape Fear.

*moon beliefs*

There are all sorts of superstitions and beliefs concerning the moon. For



instance, if you sleep outdoors and the moon shines on you, you'll become a lunatic.

*in a blue moon*

A long time, perhaps as long as a "coon's age."

*moon calf*

A fool, an idiot.

*moon-eyed*

Unreliable, erratic, also said of a horse which goes blind on certain days of the month.

*mooneyes*

Silly, adoring looks. "Every time that fellow sees her he makes mooneyes — and she two-timing him."

*moonlighting*

Holding two or more jobs at the same time, an after-hours job.

*moon mad*

Crazy.

*George Moore*

An indefatigable worker in the Valley during the early part of the 18th century. He owned a great plantation through which he had his slaves dig a canal, which many called the devil's ditch. The marks of this ditch are visible today near Wilmington. Among his other accomplishments he was the father of twenty-eight children.

*the Moore Family*

There were several of these Moores in the early 18th and on into the 19th century — James, Morris, Roger and Nathaniel, all brothers. They stood high and mighty men in the Valley in the early days and built great plantation homes for themselves. One of these homes still remains as a showplace on the Cape Fear, the plantation house of Orton. The azalea gardens of this plantation are famous far and wide. Roger Moore who built Orton was called "King Roger" because of his munificence. Colonel James Moore was in command of the American troops with Braddock's army, and George Washington served under him.

*Battle of Moore's Creek*

This was a battle fought on February 27, 1776, in which the Tories and the Loyalists of the Cape Fear Valley country were defeated by the Patriots. This battle kept the power of the King from getting control of the Carolinas from the mountains to the sea and thus prevented the splitting of the Patriot cause in two. The importance of this battle has been ignored pretty much

by historians, but nevertheless it was one of the most important of the Revolutionary War.

*Moorfields*

The famous plantation home of the industrious aforesaid George Moore. Like nearly all of these great plantation homes, it has long disappeared.

*mophead*

A person with wild hair flaring in the wind.

*mop Mary*

A charwoman.

*all mops and brooms*

Drunk.

*mop up*

To beat unmercifully, to trounce completely. "He mopped up the floor with him."

*more* rain, more rest

the *more* the merrier, the fewer the better

*not more'n half*

Half heartedly, incompletely, neglectfully. "He didn't more'n half try to win that ball game."

*morgue*

Early newspaper files where the already written biographies of prominent persons were kept, waiting for the biographees to die.

*in the morning*

Tomorrow morning. "He is going to phone me in the morning."

*morning after the night before*

The sad, headaching condition of a person after a night's carouse.

*morning droop*

Morning depression, the blue Monday feeling.

*morning sickness*

Nausea caused by pregnancy. My mother used to carry a small hunk of magnesia in her apron pocket and take a bite of it now and then when she was in that condition.

*morphidite*

Hermaphrodite.

*holy Moses!*

An exclamation.

Where was *Moses* when the light went out?  
 Standing in the corner with his shirttail out.  
 (A jocular rhyme.)

*mosing (moseying)*

Poking around, moving slowly.

*mosquito hawks*

Dragon flies.

*mosquito net*

In the old days this was used to cover beds and baby carriages to keep away mosquitos.

*Moss* always grows on the northside of a tree.

*Most* often green, but sometimes red,  
 Has its heart inside its head.  
 (Riddle: A cabbage.)

A *mother* will give as much milk for a little baby as for a big one.

*mother fucking*

A term for a lowdown person, one especially lowdown, but when "son of a bitch" is added, he is even lower still, and a fight is supposed to result.

*Mother Goose*

A legendary character associated with nursery rhymes. This old woman, so far as I know, is always depicted wearing a highpointed hat and carrying a wand, illustrative of her wonderful magic rhymes and stories. She is always shown riding an enormous goose through the air and has become a part of the children's folklore in nearly every land.

*mother mark*

A birthmark.

*Mother, mother*, may I go out to swim?  
 Yes, my darling daughter.  
 Hang your clothes on a hickory limb  
 And don't go near the water.

Not all nursery rhymes and jingles are very old. The "Mother, Mother" one is about the oldest. A similar one for which the above is no doubt a parody was compiled by one Hierocles hundreds of years ago —

“Father, father may I go to war?  
Yes, you may, my son,  
Wear your woolen comforter  
But don’t fire off your gun.

*Mother, Mother*, I am sick.  
Send for the doctor, quick, quick, quick.  
Doctor, doctor, shall I die?  
Yes, my darling, bye and bye.  
How many flowers shall I have?  
One, two, three, four....  
(A rope-jumping rhyme.)

*mother’s day*

Day that welfare checks arrive.

*mother’s pet*

Usually the spoiled son of the family.

*mother’s white-haired boy*

Much the same as mother’s pet, the hopeful of the family.

*mother wit*

Native common sense.

*mount*

To mount a woman for sexual copulation. Also to stage a play.

Never make a *mountain* out of a mole hill.

*mountain laurel*

Although mainly limited to the mountains of North Carolina, the mountain laurel has escaped — maybe the seeds were carried by birds or freshets — and is found growing here and there far down in the Valley, especially on the north side of hilly stream banks. The leaves are supposed to be narcotic and poisonous to both man and beast, but preparations from them used to be good treatment for diarrhea and skin eruptions.

*Mount of Olives*

A place of prayer and meditation where Jesus went before his crucifixion.

*Mount of Venus*

A woman’s pudendum.

*mourners’ bench*

See “age of accountability.”

*mournful* as a dove

*mourning bride*

Daisy fleabane.

*mourning fingernails*

Dirty fingernails.

The *mouse* that always trusts to one poor hole  
Can never be a mouse of any soul.

*mouse bush*

The pussy willow.

*mouse-ear chickweed*

A lower annual or perennial with small white flowers that seems to want to overrun the earth in the early spring. It is a garden pest but with plenty of care and muscle power it can finally be overcome. It is not nearly so tough a customer as wiregrass.

*mousetrap*

A woman's privy.

*mout*

Might. "Mess with me, Bo, and I mout up and wham you against the ground."

*mouth*

Insult, back talk. "Don't give me none of that mouth, child, or else."

A dog's natural bark. "That's old Joe's mouth we hear."

The *mouth* of the righteous speaketh wisdom.

A closed *mouth* catches no flies.

Not that which goeth into the *mouth* defileth a man, but that which cometh out.

What enters the *mouth* goes into the belly.

Every time he opens his *mouth* he puts his foot in it.

Keep your *mouth* shut and your purse closed.

Out of thine own *mouth* will I judge thee.

*down in the mouth*

Discouraged, melancholic.

*laugh on the wrong side of one's mouth*

To be embarrassed, chagrined.

*shoot off one's mouth*

To be over-talkative, irresponsibly garrulous.

Don't be *butter mouthed* (*honey-mouthed, mealy-mouthed, sugar-mouthed*).

*mouthful*

A bit to eat. "No, thank you, I've already had a mouthful."

The exact truth, the honest truth, a statement of actual fact. "When you say Billy Graham's the best preacher since St. Paul, you've said a mouthful."

*don't hold his mouth right*

Not reliable, not truthful.

*mouth-watering*

Desirable.

*movement*

A bowel action. "I went to the bathroom, Ma, but I didn't have a movement."

*get a move on*

To speed up, hurry, start to work.

Two *moves* are worse than a fire.

He *moves* like walking on pins.

*moving days*

Same as for marriage:

"Monday for health,  
Tuesday for wealth,  
Wednesday the best day of all," etc.

*Mr. Mac*

A somewhat fabled Valley historian and storyteller. A great deal of the material in this book came from his storehouse of folk tales and talk, and many a night I've sat with him in his millhouse talking over the old days.

*much man*

Strong, with stamina. "That Eddie York is a much man."

*much obliged*

Thank you.

Too *much* of a good thing is nothing.

*much of a muchness*

Too much, an overdoing.

*much of nothing*

A sorry person or thing, no good.

*much up*

To pet, fondle, cajole. "If you'll much up that dog, he'll like you."

*mucky*

Mirey, muddy, messy.

He who looks for *mud* usually finds it.

*coon muddle*

Brunswick stew.

*mud-fat*

Especially fat. "Uncle Billy is so mud-fat he ain't seen his knees in seven years."

*mud-flat*

The low bottom land along a stream.

*mudsill*

The bottom support, the mainstay. "That Josie Pettigrew is the mudsill in her family."

*mudslinger*

A malicious gossipier.

*muff*

A woman's pudendum.

*muff-diver*

A cock-sucker.

*mug*

The chamber pot. In our family the chamber pot was never called such. It was always spoken of as the mug. We children would have been ashamed to call it by its proper name.

*mug shot*

A cheap photo of the face, especially of a criminal.

*mugwump*

An ironical term for a leader, a well-known politician, a fence straddler. "His mug on one side of the fence and his wump on the other."

*mulberry*

A common fruit in the Valley for feeding hogs and children. On our farm we used to have two kinds of mulberries, the white and the black, and in

the early spring we children watched the trees with avid appetites. As soon as the berries were beginning to get ripe, we would climb up and stuff ourselves and then we had plenty of trouble with diarrhea. We boys used to use the inner bark of the tree to make whips, calf traces, swings, jumping ropes, and so on.

When the *mulberry* buds appear, the frost is over.

***“Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush”***

A singing, imitating game. The children form a ring, all joining hands, and dance or skip around as they sing.

“Here we go round the mulberry bush,  
The mulberry bush, the mulberry bush,  
Here we go round the mulberry bush,  
So early in the morning.”

As they sing the last line they unclasp hands and begin imitating in pantomime the next activity in their song.

“This is the way we dress ourselves,  
Dress ourselves, dress ourselves,  
This is the way we dress ourselves,  
So early in the morning.”

And so on with “This is the way we comb our hair,” “This is the way we go to school,” “sweep the floor,” “bake our bread,” and on until the list becomes tiresome and the game ends.

***mule***

Once the Valley farmers’ mainstay for ploughing and hauling, but of recent years replaced there as elsewhere by the farm tractor. Missouri mules were supposed to be the best. Every late winter or early spring they would begin to arrive by rail in the towns and hamlets for sale or swapping. There were all sorts of folk sayings and lore about mules, such as—

“One white foot, buy him,  
Two white feet, try him,  
Three white feet, look well about him,  
Four white feet, do without him.”

And so on to—

“Gray mules never die, they turn into Baptist preachers.”

Often a farmer would develop great affection for his mule or mules. We had two loyal ones, Mike and Tom. They became almost like members of the family. When they grew too old for regular work and my father had



to swap them off, we children wept, and he looked tight-lipped and grave enough too.

I am reminded of Amos Honeycutt, a Negro tenant farmer who lived some miles from our home and who had a mule named Nora. She took sick and died. Amos couldn't get over grieving for her and finally committed suicide. I saw the half-legible note he left in his ragged cap by the fish pond's edge — "My old mule is dead, and I am drowned in this pond."

I recall too the doings of another Valley farmer, one Dennis Ryan. He got himself a Missouri mule, named her Sara and by late spring had her pretty well broke for ploughing and hauling. A spur line railroad was being built from Raleigh to Fayetteville at that time, and there was much publicity as to the day the first train was to come through the neighborhood on the new track. Dennis' wife Ruby said for sure and certain they must take the children over to the near siding to see that happen. So when the day came, Dennis hitched his still somewhat skittish Sara to his one-horse wagon, loaded wife and children in, and they all set out. When they got to the little siding, Dennis unhitched and tied Sara to a tree limb and said he would ease the wagon down the slope nearer the tracks himself. Ruby and the children could then have a closer look at the new wonder. He put himself between the shafts and pulled the wagon slowly down the slight incline. Suddenly here came the train, out of the woods as it were, with a great sloosh of sparks pouring from its smokestack, its bell ringing and its whistle shrieking. In his sudden surprise and terror Dennis tore away from there as if the dogs were after him. The trouble was he forgot to let go his convulsive grasp on the shafts and thus in his flight hauled wagon, wife, children and all with him. The wagon hit a stump and turned over. Everybody was spilled out. Most of the family suffered some bruises and the oldest boy, Billy Sunday, broke his arm. As for tiny Bo-peep, her nose bled and bled.

A lot of jeering and hee-hawing about the incident filled the neighborhood for a while, and the local wit Barney Cofield said he'd be glad to take Dennis in charge and mule-break him good. He'd do it for nothing, he said, provided he could get the use of him to plough his garden a time or two.

For some time Dennis was the butt of a lot of joking, and the Ryan children were shamed too at school when their father was gleefully referred to as a mule.

But before too long it all passed over. Dennis and Ruby by hard work through the years accumulated some property and gave all their children a good education. One child, Billy Sunday, for all his mother's hope and naming, never became a preacher. Instead he turned to the law and successfully so. He ran once for congress but failed in that bid.

Also a barren husband, a sexually impotent man.

If you want to make a good crop, you've got to take care of your *mule*.

The *mule's* gallop is soon over.

*muley (mulish)*

Stubborn like a mule.

*mullein*

A common plant throughout the Valley. It loves to grow in fence jambs and along the roadsides. It grows up to the height of a man's head or beyond and has a whitish fuzzy bloom. It is also called Achilles' heel after the famous Greek warrior. The tea of this mullein was especially good for stomach pains in children and also the warmed leaves, as in the case of Jimson weed or collard leaves, placed on sores and poisoned places were considered, and still are, a good remedy to bring down the swelling. Many a young girl in the Valley has been wont to make her cheeks pretty and pink by rubbing her face with the velvety leaves. Another good folk medicine from mullein used to be to take the root of the mullein, stew it along with wild cherry bark, brown sugar and a little vinegar, and then keep it on hand for colds and coughs. "They ain't nothing better in this world to cure up that hacking and barking," said Mr. Jimmy Ackland. The oil from its blooms used to be recommended for earache. According to one book I read, the Romans called the mullein "candelaria" from their custom of taking the long dry stalks and dipping them in suet or some kind of oil and using them as funeral torches. The Greeks were supposed to utilize the leaves for lamp wicks. It was sometimes called Indian tobacco since the Indians were wont to smoke the leaves.

*mulligrubs*

Melancholies, the blues. Same as the dismals.

In the *multitude* of counselors there is safety.

*mum* as an oyster

*Mumble Peg*

A game of dexterity. A double-bladed knife was always necessary for this game. The long blade would be open full and the short blade half way, and each boy in turn would take the knife and throw it so that one or the other of the blades would hopefully stick into the ground. If the knife fell on its side, it counted for nothing and the next player took over. If it fell on its back, the thrower scored five points. If only the short blade was stuck in the ground and the rest of the knife did not touch, he got fifteen points. Sometimes the method of scoring was different in different localities. There were many movements in the game, one finally being the holding of the knife flat in the hand and throwing it over one's shoulder to see if its blade would

stick in the ground. Another one was to lay the knife in the hand with the blade sticking out and then with the forefinger flip the blade in such a way as to make the knife spin in the air and if it stuck in the ground, that was a certain number of points too.

In some localities the game was played specifically as follows:

1. The knife was held in the palm, first in the right and afterwards in the left hand with the point of the blade outwards and thrown so as to revolve towards the player. If it stuck in the ground, the player would continue with the proper number of points.
2. The knife was rested on the right and left fist with the point uppermost and thrown sideways.
3. The knife was pressed with the point resting on each forefinger and thumb of both hands in succession and cast outwards. After this it is held by the point and flipped, (4) from the breast, nose and each eye, (5) from each ear, crossing arms and taking hold of the opposite ear with the free hand, (6) over the head backwards. Some folks call the game stick-knife.

*mummick*

Same as momick.

*mummy*

Mother.

*mums*

Abbreviation for chrysanthemums.

*Mum's* the word.

*munts*

Months.

*cry blue murder*

Loud squalling, an outcry.

*Murder* will out.

The wounds of a *murdered* man will bleed when the murderer comes near him.

*murgins*

A multitude, a tremendous number, a great deal, much, sometimes spelled "mergins." I have asked many scholars where this word came from and I have never been able to find a satisfactory answer. Perhaps it is a mispronunciation of margins. "John Allen Matthews has murgins of dollars."

*muscadine*

Wild black grapes that used to grow plentifully in the Valley. They are becoming rarer and rarer. What happy hours we boys used to have climbing high in the trees where the muscadines grew and where after frost they were black as the ace of spades and sweet as sugar. I remember many times eating so many up in a tree that my head swam and I had to be careful how I climbed down.

*muscle out*

To hold an object extended at arm's length. A test of strength with us boys used to be to take an axe and hold it by the end of the helve and stretch one's arm out level and full length and see if the axe could be held extended. "Say, Ervin, let's see you muscle out that axe."

*Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast.*

And then we used to recite a somewhat derisive rhyme:

"Music hath charm to soothe a savage,  
Rend a rock or bust a cabbage."

*face the music*

To measure up to one's responsibility, to face trial or meet one's punishment.

*Musical Chairs*

A popular young people's game. See "Marching to Jerusalem."

*mush-head*

A foolish, light-headed person.

*mushmelon*

Muskmelon.

*music roots*

Sweet potatoes.

*a bit of muslin*

A girl.

*mustard*

High spirit, spicy behavior or talk, pep.

*mustard plaster*

A soft cloth spread with a paste of dry mustard mixed with water. This put on a child's chest was to relieve croup or cough. And what terrific things these plasters were! I remember when my mother would put one on me, I would lie there waiting for it to fire up and soon it would. Under the fiery burning, coughs and pains and aches were all forgotten. Thus the cure. See "Aunt Jemima's plaster."

*must did (musted)*

Must have. "I went in there to make up the bed and you must did, for it's done made up."

*muster day*

The time appointed for the military training in the Civil War.

*muster grounds*

The grounds where the soldiers gathered. When I was a little boy, I used to hear my father speak about a place up the road as "the muster ground." I thought it had something to do with growing mustard there until I learned better.

*Mutt and Jeff*

A tall and short couple, also refers to the once-popular comic strip.

*mutton head*

A dull fellow.

*mutton suet*

The fat from sheep or cattle used to grease one's chest as therapy for the croup.

*muzzle*

An old-timey contrivance of wires and sometimes white oak withes. It was used over the mouth of a mule, a horse or a steer so that the animal wouldn't eat the corn or cotton while plowing.

*My dame* hath a lame tame crane.

My dame hath a crane that is lame.

Say, sweet Jane, let the dame's lame crane

Feed and come home again.

(A tongue twister.)

*my eye!*

A mild interjection.

*"My Faith Looks Up to Thee"*

A beautiful and ever-comforting hymn. It has always been one of the Valley favorites and is known throughout the world, having been translated into some two dozen languages. The words are by Dr. Ray Palmer (1808-1897) and the melody by Lowell Mason (1792-1872).

"My faith looks up to Thee,

Thou Lamb of Calvary,

Saviour divine.

Now hear me while I pray,

Take all my guilt away,  
O let me from this day  
Be wholly thine."

*My Mama Sent Me*

A child's game. The children divide into two groups and one of them, "It," selects some form of housework that they should all imitate. The first action group marches up to the second and says, "My mama sent me to you." "What for to do?" "To do as I do." Then the first group goes through the motions of the work chosen and the other side tries to guess what the work is. When the guess is correct, then that second side becomes the active group and marches up to the first group, and the game goes on.

*My mama told me* long ago  
Don't marry a girl that you don't know.  
She'll spend all your money,  
Sell all your clothes.  
And what will become of you  
God only knows.  
(An advice rhyme.)

*"My Old Kentucky Home"*

Now the Kentucky State song, made so by act of the Legislature in 1928. It is always played and received with wild enthusiasm at the Kentucky Derby and at the University of Kentucky's football games. There was long a tradition that the song referred to the Old Federal Hill mansion in Bardstown where Stephen Foster was said to have visited and where he was also said to have composed it. The Honorable John Rowan, owner of the place, was a cousin of the Fosters, and Stephen's sister Charlotte was supposed to be engaged to young Rowan. She died of typhoid fever while visiting there, October 20, 1829.

The mansion is in the public mind supposed to be the actual Kentucky Home referred to in the song. But if one looks closely at Foster's lyric he will realize this cannot be. Actually the composer had in mind a slave cabin as he wrote the song and not any white folks' mansion.

"The young folks roll on the little  
cabin floor,  
All merry, all happy and bright,  
By'n by Hard Times come a-knocking  
at the door.  
Then my old Kentucky Home, good night!  
Weep no more, my lady,  
Oh, weep no more today!  
We will sing one song for the

Old Kentucky Home,  
For the old Kentucky Home faraway."

"Federal Hill" is now a historic shrine, and thousands visit it each year.

In the late 1950's a number of citizens in Bardstown organized a "Stephen Foster Drama Association." Funds were raised privately and by State appropriation for the construction of an amphitheater in the woods just south of Federal Hill. There "The Stephen Foster Story," a dramatization of a few intense years of the composer's life, opened on June 26, 1959. It has been presented nightly for some ten weeks each summer since 1959 to enthusiastic crowds.

*My old mistus* promised me  
When she died, she'd set me free.  
She lived so long her head got bald.  
She got outer da notion of dying at all.  
Now she's done and gone to hell  
I hope the devil will burn her well.  
(An old minstrel song.)

*myself*

Used for emphasis. "I wouldn't be that crazy for a million dollars myself."

# N

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*navel*

Navel.

*nabob*

A highfalutin person, a showy person, a representative of royalty.

One *nail* drives out another.

*nails*

Difficulties, obstructions in the way.

One of the trials of our barefoot days as children was the danger of stepping on protruding nails in old lumber. There were many cures for this hurt, and Miss Cissie Atwater, the Negro schoolteacher, told me that once when she stuck two nails in her foot at the schoolhouse grounds where the carpenters had thrown nail-infested boards aside, she went on home, put a dough poultice on her foot, then got the two nails, greased them well and stuck them between the cracks of the schoolhouse weatherboarding. Every day for five days she went and greased these nails to keep off the lockjaw. It worked, for Miss Cissie didn't have any lockjaw as a result of her wound. I thought about this afterwards and remembered that Miss Cissie had an A-1 teacher's certificate provided her by the county school board.

*cut-nails*

As differentiated from hand-wrought nails. But of course after the wrought or blacksmith-made nails disappeared from the scene the word "cut" was dropped off too, and only the word "nails" remained.

*nail the lid on the coffin.*

To complete a crushing defeat, put an end to, finalize a distressful fact or result.



*nail to the cross*

In the game of Roly Holey when one player received three pigs — that is, had missed hitting another player three times with the thrown ball — he was stood up against the side of the house or the barn with his back turned to the players, and three efforts would be made to nail him to the cross with the ball.

*nairn*

Nary one, not one.

*naked* as a shorn sheep

*naked* as a stone

*naked* as a yard dog

as *naked* as the day he was born

I was *naked* and ye clothed me not.

*naked bed*

Bed without sheets or any covering.

*naked truth*

The pure truth.

*name*

Good reputation. "That man had a name in his neighborhood."

A good *name* is rather to be chosen than great riches.

*named after*

To give one person the name of another. "My least 'un there is named Woodrow, after Woodrow Wilson."

*name dropper*

A person who brags on his acquaintance with people of importance. In conversation, with seeming carelessness, he drops the names of these personages.

*name is mud*

To be in disgrace.

*in the name of*

Introductory part of an exclamation or asseveration, as Archibald Henderson's snort, "What in the name of goodness are you doing in my bed, Bill Faulkner?"

*"Nancy Till"*

My youngest sister Erma was taught this song early and, when she was four,

she could stand up in bed and sing it merrily as a bird, and we would sweep her into our arms with happy cries, saying, "You're sweet enough to eat!" Believe it or not, she didn't grow up spoiled.

"Down in the canebrake close by the mill  
Lives a purty little girl, her name is Nancy Till.  
She knew that I loved her, she knew it long,  
Walk about and promenade and sing a little song.  
Come, love, come and go along with me,  
My boat lies high on the old Tennessee."

In the Frank Brown Collection, Vol. III, p. 491, this is set down as a Negro song as sung by Dr. Kemp P. Battle, UNC President, 1910. Dr. Battle sang many old songs and recited jingles and proverbs for Dr. Brown which he copied.

*nanny goat*

A female goat.

*nap*

Nape. "He took that old suck-egg hound by the nap of the neck and twisted him round his head and sent him flying through the air like a bird. Amen!"

*nappy*

Stylish, meticulously dressed.

*nappy-headed*

Sleepy. Also kinky, as "He's got a gang of nappy-headed children."

*nard homespun*

A cheap and popular cloth in the old days, evidently "nard" being a corruption of "Northern."

*nar'n*

Nary one.

*nasty-particular*

Over-particular, choosy.

*in the nation!*

A mild exclamation. "What in the nation are you up to, boy?"

*national security*

A phrase too often used to cover up a nation's territorial ambitions.

*natural born*

So born by nature, born so. "The trouble with him is he's a natural born fool."

*natural law*

A generalization about the nature of things and their behavior. It would seem that matter does not obey laws but rather it behaves in such a way that we read laws from the behavior.

*natural order of man*

The racial hierarchy of man on earth as set and determined by the divine power which of course, according to the whites, sees to it that the white race is superior to the darker races.

*nature*

Sex power or ability. "Cleveland got tore up by a sawmill belt and for a while he thought he'd lost his nature — but when that pretty nurse come to wait on him, he said he found out he hadn't."

*nature of things*

The basic way of the world.

*navigate*

Irrigate. "Mr. Jones is navigating his tobacco and what a difference it's making!"

Can there any good thing come out of *Nazareth*?

*"Nearer, My God, to Thee"*

One of the most favored of all hymns. It has brought comfort to many a soul in final distress. It was said that the fatally injured President McKinley had it sung to him often during his long ordeal into death. And I remember how we cried at home over the going down of the mighty Titanic and the touching brave last moments as the ship's orchestra played this "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

The hymn was also a favorite of the sportive Edward VII. The words were written by a young Englishwoman, Sarah Flower Adams, and the music by our American Lowell Mason who wrote some 1200 hymns, among them the consoling "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" and "From Greenland's Icy Mountains."

"Nearer, my God, to thee,  
Nearer to thee,  
E'en though it be a cross  
That raiseth me;  
Still all my song shall be,  
Nearer, my God, to thee,  
Nearer, my God, to thee,  
Nearer to thee!"

*nearly 'bout*

Almost. "I'm nearly 'bout finished."

*near side*

The left side.

*near thing*

A close call, a close shave.

*neat*

Unwatered, straight. "I like my whiskey neat."

*neat* as a pin

*neat but not gaudy*

An old saying. "Neat but not gaudy, as the monkey said when they painted his ass green."

*Nebusadnessar*

Nebuchadnezzar.

*necessary*

A privy.

*Necessity* is a hard nurse but she raises strong children.

*Necessity* is the mother of invention.

*neck*

To hug and kiss and indulge in sex play. "I've been necked down to a nub," she said, fanning herself.

*neck and neck*

Almost equal, a close contest. "The horses came in neck and neck."

I'd rather my *neck* felt the yoke than the axe.

*in the neck*

To be badly hurt or abused, an unhappy result. "He got it in the neck."

*to save my neck*

Used for emphasis. "I can't think of his name to save my neck."

*necked*

Naked.

*neck of the woods*

The neighborhood, the local region. "The folks are God-fearing people in this neck of the woods."

*neck or naught*

All or nothing.

Limber *necks* live longer than stiff ones.

*necksher*

Handkerchief.

*necktie*

A halter, a noose.

*necktie party*

A hanging, a lynching.

*Old Ned*

A bad temper, the devil. "That fellow's got Old Ned in him, and you better watch out or he'll cut you with that switchblade knife."

*Need* hath no law.

don't *need* it any more than a goat needs a trombone

don't *need* it any more than a pig needs a sidesaddle

*need be*

Required, compulsory, necessary. "You'll have to be ready to pay in that money if need be."

A thing not *needed* is easily found.

*on needles and pins*

Nervous, anxious, apprehensive.

*Needles* and pins, needles and pins,  
When a man marries, his trouble begins.  
(A proverb rhyme.)

*Needle's Eye*

A courting game, even if most often a shy one. It is much like "London Bridge." Two players, a boy and girl, raise their clasped hands in an arch. The other players pass under in a line, all singing.

"That needle's eye  
That does supply  
The thread that runs so true.

"O many a lass  
Have we let pass  
For the sake of kissing you."  
(Because we wanted you.)

or

“Many a beau  
Have we let go  
Because we wanted you.”

On the word “you” the arch falls around the neck of the person beneath it at the time. If the one caught is a girl, she is supposed to let the boy who helped form the arch kiss her. If a boy, then the girl arch partner is supposed to kiss him. Then the player who does the kissing drops out and the one kissed takes his or her place and the game goes on.

With the automobile so available for snuggling up and/or courting, this game like many others has pretty much disappeared from the Valley. But I prophesy that it and many others will someday return.

*needless to say*

An introductory cliché.

*nee’n*

Needn’t.

Don’t *neglect* your own field to plant your neighbor’s.

*Negro blood*

Blood thought in the old days to be different from white blood and thus contaminated. The laws in the Southern states and in most states of the Union have until recently prohibited the intermixing of white and Negro blood. If a person was one-eighth Negro, this prohibition obtained. Many tragic stories have been recounted because of this concept. See “mixed blood.”

*Negro news*

News passed along by Negroes, somewhat like grapevine news.

*Neighbor, Neighbor, Lend Me Your Hatchet*

A popular game in the old days.

*Neither* a lender nor a borrower be.

*Neither* beg nor borrow.

It’s *neither* here nor there.

Indefinite, insignificant.

*neither fish, flesh nor good red herring*

An indefinite thing, a person or thing lacking in character.

*nellify*

Nullify.

*nerts!*

An interjection, nuts!

*to get on one's nerves*

To irritate, to disturb.

*nervous Nellie*

An easily upset person.

*nervy*

Bold, impudent.

*nest*

The female pudendum.

*nestes*

Nests.

Cast down your *nets* where you are.

If you gently touch a *nettle*,  
It will sting you for your pains.  
Grasp it like a man of mettle  
And as soft as silk remains.  
(Proverb rhyme.)

Out *nettle*, in dock,  
Dock shall have a new smock.  
(Nonsense rhyme.)

*never*

For emphasis. "He lammed at me with his fist and he never even touched me."

*Never* be weary of well-doing.

*Never* bite off more than you can chew.

*Never* buy a pig in a poke.

*Never* fall out with your bread and butter.

*Never* fish in troubled waters.

*Never* leave till tomorrow what you should do today.

*Never* look a gift horse in the mouth.

*Never* make a mountain out of a molehill.

*Never* run when you can walk.

*Never* sit when you can lie.

*Never* speak of a halter in a house where one has been hanged.

*Never* stir up more snakes than you can kill.

*Never* walk when you can sit.

*never mind*

Don't bother.

*never, never land*

A dreamland, Utopia, unreal, imaginary place.

*never no more*

Never more, never again.

There's nothing *new* under the sun.

*new ball game*

A new start, new plans.

A *new* broom sweeps clean.

A *new* broom sweeps clean, but an old broom knows where the dirt is.

*newground*

A piece of ground newly cleared for cultivation or land in the process of being cleared.

*New Jersey tea*

More of a shrub than a flower. It grows plentifully in dry woods or gravelly places. In midsummer its white feathery flower centers show up clearly. The Indian doctors used this plant for the treatment of wounds and venereal sores.

*New moon*, new moon, moon so bright—

Wish I may and wish I might

See before tomorrow night

Someone who would please my sight.

(A divination rhyme.)

If one would turn around three times on the left heel while reciting this rhyme and then make three wishes, the wishes were supposed to come true. I never have tried it.

No *news* is good *news*.

*news totter*

A gossip.

Bad *news* travels fast.



*New Year's Day*

The time for new resolutions and the taking of vows to do better, to break off bad habits such as drinking liquor, smoking cigarettes and indulging in indolence and sloth. And for good luck and health during the year, one should be sure to eat turnip greens, hog jowl, and blackeyed peas. My mother always served these peas on this holiday and jocularly urged us children to eat a lot for good luck.

*next to nothing*

Of poor worth or quality. "His excuse was next to nothing."

*n.g.*

An abbreviation for "no good."

*nice* as pie*nicely*

Satisfactorily. "Harry Lucas has had his gall bladder out and the report is he's doing nicely."

*Nicholas*

See "second sight."

*in the nick of time*

Just in time. "The fire engine arrived in the nick of time."

*Old Nick*

The devil.

*bad nigger*

One who violated the old Southern concept of "the Negro in his place."

Give a *nigger* a book and you just as well kill him.

Give a *nigger* an education and you'll ruin a good ploughhand.

*to nigger*

To work hard, to behave obsequiously. "No suh, I ain't gonna nigger for him!"

*niggerhead*

A kind of scattered, dark, field rock showing here and there through the soil. "Flora MacDonald's daughter Ann and her husband Captain MacLeod lived over there in the woods and you can still find the place because of the niggerheads scattered all around," said Mr. Mac.

*nigger head point*

A projection of land in the Cape Fear River near Wilmington which always denoted to a ship pilot that he was nearing the town.

*nigger in the woodpile*

A hidden obstruction, undisclosed difficulty, concealed cause.

*nigger lover*

One who has a sentimental attachment to the cause of racial justice.

*nigger luck*

Undeserved luck, luck that outlucks luck.

*nigger rich*

Very rich indeed. In the old days the owner of many slaves was so designated.

All *niggers* look alike to me.

*niggertoes*

Brazil nuts. How we children in the old days on Christmas morning would rush to get our stockings and there find wonderful English walnuts, and raisins, an orange or two and especially the good old niggertoes! "Be a good boy and Old Sandy Claus will bring you a heap of niggertoes for Christmas" was a common saying around our house.

*white man's nigger*

An Uncle Tom term, a Negro who "knows his place" and is popular with the poor whites and rednecks in the South.

The *night* makes no difference to a blind man.

To rest well at *night*  
Let your diet be light  
Or else you'll complain  
With stomach and pain.

In the *night* all cats are black.

Eat light at *night* and you'll sleep well.

If a man walk in the *night*, he stumbleth.

There's no *night* without day.

*night rail*

A nightgown.

*night rider*

A shady character, one who slips about in the night and secretly terrorizes his neighbors. A term also applied to the Ku Klux Klansmen.

*night soil*

Human excreta used for fertilizer.

as *nimble* as a flea

*nincompoop*

A stupid person.

*Nine o'clock* is striking.  
Mother, may I go out?  
Three boys are waiting  
For to take me out.

One to give me candy,  
One to give me pears,  
One to give me fifty cents  
For a kiss behind the stairs.

I don't want your candy,  
I don't want your pears,  
I don't want your fifty cents  
For a kiss behind the stairs.

I can wash the dishes,  
I can sweep the floor,  
I can kiss the Chinaman  
Behind the kitchen door!  
(A teasing rhyme.)

*nineteenth hole*

The bar or refreshment room of a golf course.

*nine to the dozen*

A short dozen, short change.

*“The Ninety and Nine”*

Another Valley standby hymn. It always had and still has a telling effect in revival meetings when the pursued sinner is made to feel that ninety-nine “sheep” out of a flock of one hundred are “in the shelter of the fold” and he, the “lost sheep,” should give up his bullheaded sinfulness and join those in the safety of the heavenly Shepherd's care.

It is said the words were written by Elizabeth Cecilia Clephane, an English schoolgirl, in her exercise book and were not published till after her death at the age of 37. Ira D. Sanky (1840-1908) of the Moody-Sanky team wrote the tune.

The hymn had its prompting from the reference to the ninety and nine in Matthew 18:12-13, which says, “How think ye? If a man have a hundred sheep and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine and goeth into the mountains and seeketh that which is gone astray? And

if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.”

“There were ninety and nine that safely lay  
In the shelter of the fold,  
But one was out on the hills away,  
Far off from the gates of gold.  
Away on the mountain wild and bare,  
Away from the tender Shepherd’s care,  
Away from the tender Shepherd’s care.

“But all through the mountains, thunder-riven,  
And up from the rocky steep  
There rose a glad cry to the gate of heaven,  
‘Rejoice, I have found my sheep!’  
And the angels echoed around the throne,  
Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own.  
Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own.”

*nine ways for Sunday*

In every direction, helter-skelter.

*nine yards square*

Absolutely honest, reliable. “He’s nine yards square.”

*ninny*

Mother’s milk. Also the teat. “Give that baby its ninny, Ella, and it’ll stop its crying.”

*nip in the bud*

To stop a thing at its beginning.

*nipping frost*

A cold and biting frost.

*nirvana*

A common word for oblivion, nothingness, complete indolence, mental emptiness, final rest. A Buddhist term.

*nits will be lice*

Boys will be men, little evils grow to be big, small habits grow large, and so on.

*nitty-gritty*

Tough going, the showdown. “Well, when you get down to the nitty-gritty you’ll know who your friends are.”

*“Nobody Knows de Trouble I See”*

One of the finest of all laments of a grieving people. This was a favorite

in the repertoire of the great and tragic Paul Robeson, and thousands heard him sing it, and thousands still hear him on phonograph records — hear him and wonder at and ponder in these latter days the nature of our democratic faith and the practice thereof that kept our brothers in murky bondage for three hundred years and more.

“Nobody knows de trouble I see,  
 Nobody knows but Jesus,  
 Nobody knows de trouble I see.  
 Glory, hallelujah!

“Sometimes I’m up, sometimes I’m down,  
 Oh, yes, Lawd!  
 Sometimes I’m almost to de groun’.  
 Oh, yes, Lawd!

“Nobody knows,” etc.

*no can do*

Unable to do.

*no compris*

Not understanding.

*no 'count*

Trifling, lazy, no good.

*no cross, no crown*

Even Homer *nods*.

*no earthly good*

No good at all, absolutely worthless.

*no end*

A great deal, very many, much. “It pleases me no end to see you up and about again.”

*no-fair*

Unfair. “That’s no-fair to treat me like that.”

*no flies on him*

A person of good character, honest dealings, an industrious individual.

*No fool* like an old fool.

*no go*

No deal, no action, a cancellation.

*no good*

In poor health, feeling poorly, rundown.

*no how*

Not at all, not good. "How're you feelin' this hot day, Mr. Tenney?"  
"No how."

*no ifs and ands*

No arguments about it, the certain truth.

*noisy* as a boiler factory

*no'm*

No, ma'am.

*no manner account*

Worthless, an indolent, lazy person.

of *no more use* than a man's titties or the Pope's balls

A little *nonsense* now and then  
Is relished by the wisest men.

*none* so blind as those who won't see

*none* so deaf as those who won't hear

*no nothing*

An emphatic statement of nothing. "You know what kind of garden I've got this year? — no nothing, that's what."

*"No, Not One"*

A popular church and Sunday School hymn which says among other things,  
"There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus. No, not one, no, not one."

*no occasion*

No cause to, no reason for. "He had no occasion to quarrel with Henry Spears."

*nooget*

Nugget.

*No pains*, no gains.

*norate*

To spread by word of mouth, to gossip, to pass on rumors. "It's norated all about that the big meeting at Pleasant Union is stirring up sinners to a fare-you-well."

*No Robbers Out Today*

A simple child's game. One or two players hide in a hedge or ditch, and then the other players come innocently along singing or chanting.

“No robbers out today,  
No robbers out today.  
We are singing on our way  
For there's no robbers out today.”

And then suddenly the robber (or robbers) darts out and tries to catch one of the passersby. Those that are caught join the robber gang and the game goes on until all become robbers or they become tired of playing.

*no rose* without a thorn

He can't see ahead of his *nose*.

He is led by the *nose*.

He prays through his *nose*.

If the *nose* itches, company is coming.

An itchy *nose* shows that someone is talking about you.

Don't cut off your *nose* to spite your face.

*nosebleed cure*

A nosebleed can be stopped by applying a wet cloth to the back of the head.

*keep one's nose clean*

To be above reproach, to act circumspectly.

*long nose*

A meddler. “There comes old Mis' Leary with her long nose and now the fat is in the fire.”

*on the nose*

The exact place or time.

*nosebag*

A term designating mealtime. “Hey, you folks, time to put on the nosebag. Come on now.”

*nose out of joint*

A condition of jealousy. “Little Jonas has got a new baby sister and, man, is his nose out of joint!”

*nose rag*

Handkerchief.

*nose to the grindstone*

A hard-working or penurious condition descriptive of a plodder or an overworked person.

*nosing*

Smelling.

*no soap*

No deal, no business, lack of success.

*not a Chinaman's chance*

No chance at all. "I don't have a Chinaman's chance of getting that job."

*not by a long shot*

By no manner of means.

*notch*

The female pudendum.

*notch on a stick*

A good-for-nothing. "Brother, you ain't more'n a notch on a stick in that church."

*note shaver*

A usurious note-discounter, a stingy money-lender.

*no telling*

No estimating. "No telling how many poor old women died in that bombing."

*not that I know of*

Not to know. A common phrase for pleading ignorance.

*Nothing* is certain but death and taxes.

From *nothing* nothing comes.

*"Nothing But the Blood"*

One of the favorite revival or big-meeting hymns. It takes a tough sinner to stand against its pounding four-four time, the preacher's loud calling for repentance and the elderly sisters giving out their shoutings — all a pouring of mighty sound.

"What can wash away my sins?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus.



Oh, precious is the flow  
 That makes me white as snow,  
 No other fount I know—  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

*nothing doing*

No agreement, a denial.

*if nothing don't happen*

If all goes well. "I'll see you tomorrow if nothing don't happen."

*nothing much*

Very little, hardly any. "Since I got my Social Security I don't do nothing much."

*nothing to crow over*

A small, unimportant thing or matter.

*nothing to write home about*

The same as nothing to crow over.

*Nothing ventured, nothing gained.*

*to have a notion*

To have the impulse to act.

*not on your life*

Emphatically not.

*not particular*

Not especially, not much. "Do you like turnip greens?" "Not particular."

*not worth a damn*

Worthless.

*not worth a continental*

Of no value, worthless or nearly worthless, referring to the paper money issued by the Continental Congress prior to 1789.

*not worth a hoot*

Worthless.

*no two ways*

A definite and positive statement of fact. "That Farquhar Campbell according to the records was a combination of Tory-Whig in the Revolutionary War and no two ways about it — just go read the old records."

*No use* having a dog and doing the barking yourself.

*now*

A moment back, recently. "He's just now left here."

*no ways*

Not at all, by no means.

*Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep*

A child's prayer, and how often did we Green children kneel at our beds and sing out this snug little happy feeling prayer to some great kindly omnipotent power in the dark air, around the house and up among the reaching far stars above.

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.  
And if I die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

There were variations on this, but the "Now I lay me" was the most popular one with us. Sometimes in lighter moments and in no prayerful mood at all we would chant out some other prayer statements —

I lay me down upon my side,  
I pray the Lord to be my guide,  
If I die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take. Amen.

Then there was another one we sometimes liked to say—

Four corners to my bed,  
Four angels round my head,  
One to pray, one to wake,  
Two to guard me till daybreak—  
And, blessed guardian angels, keep  
Me safe from danger while I sleep.

*No, you ain't!*

An expression of astonishment or disbelief.

*nubbin*

A small underdeveloped ear of corn. "No wonder Roy's mule's ribs show through like bed slats — he only feeds him a few nubbins once a day."

A young girl's swelling breasts.

*"Nuisance and Disturber"*

*The News & Observer*. See "Old Reliable."

*number one*

One's self or one's own belongings or interest.

Urinating. "Wait for me, I've got to do number one."

*numbers*

According to popular belief, whether folk or cultured, certain numbers represent mystic powers and divine events and therefore have metaphysical as well as allegorical significance, such as 3, 7, 11, 70 and so on. And, of course, there is one number that has a malevolent power and influence — the number 13. Many hotels and business buildings have no 13th floor.

*number thirteen*

According to superstition, the most unlucky number.

*number two*

Defecation.

*have one's number up*

A time when one must face death, or the moment of responsibility or ordeal.

*nunh-unh*

A grunt of disapproval or negation.

*to be nursed in cotton*

Petted, spoiled.

*nuss (nurse)*

To suckle, to nurse.

*nussing child*

Unweaned child.

*nut*

A downpayment on a purchase, the cost of the job.

A financial risk, investment. "Now that he has recovered his nut he can spend more money on the show."

Head.

A bolt head, the female part that screws on the male part.

*nut grass*

A most cantankerous field pest. I know from much experience of hoeing, chopping, digging and burning the stuff. We'd do that and then the next morning there its little evil green heads would be peeping up out of the earth again. Many a farmer has cursed the day this pest got started on his farm.

"Yes sir," said Emmet Ennis to me one day, "there's many a tough

thing in this Cape Fear River Valley, Mr. Paul, many a tough thing. You've heard of whit leather. You've heard of dried sweetgum trees, of seasoned dogwood, of blackgum trees that neither lightning nor dynamite can split — but I'll tell you there's nothing as hard to wear down and out and get rid of as this here nut grass that grows in the fields. Ma and Pa fought it for many years. Now old Judge Hinton had told Pa that hogs would kill it. So Pa tried hogs for years. The hogs would root and dig and get after this stuff and then when we thought we'd got it whipped and started corn or cotton there, out it would come thick as ever. Finally Pa said to me when I was a little teeny boy, 'Son, there's nothing to do but move off and leave this stuff. Let it take over.' So we decided to let that land lie out and the pines grow up and take it. Well sir, twenty years went by and the woods grewed up over the place and of course the nut grass disappeared. We sold that timber off for pulpwood and got a bulldozer to push up the stumps and went back to farming the land — twenty years now, later! Do you hear me! Well sir, what do you think? That nut grass come up thick as hairs on a dog's back that spring. The stuff had been lying deep in the ground just waiting its time. So we give up the fields again and when you drive by my place you'll see thick young pine timber growing there again. Won't be long before we'll sell that timber off but, believe you me, we won't try to farm that place — we'll plant new pine seedlings on it. Yes sir, take it from me, nut grass is the toughest stuff the world has ever seen!"

It is reputed to be so tough that farmers burning it say it reseeds itself from the smoke.

*nuther*

Neither.

*nut house*

Asylum for the insane.

*nutmegs*

The testes.

*nuts*

Testicles

Reference to a hysterical person, crazy even.

*nuts!*

An exclamation of disapproval.

*nuts about*

Crazy about, be devoted to. "Jackie Gleason says he's nuts about country music."

*nuts and bolts*

Inner workings, important matters. "Let's get to the nuts and bolts of the thing."

*in a nutshell*

In a concentrated form, abbreviated.

*Nuts in May*

A children's singing game. This is one of the oldest games in the Valley and comes from far back out of its English heritage. But of course in the Valley there aren't any nuts ripened in May, and some scholars say that nuts stand for knots and that the ancient song was "knots in May," knots or nosegays of the flowering hawthorn. The game is played by children joining hands and forming two straight lines some several feet apart. One of the lines skips toward the other singing as it comes—

"Here we come gathering nuts in May,  
Nuts in May, nuts in May—  
Here we come gathering nuts in May  
On a cold and frosty morning."

The first line now stands still while the second line advances and retires.

"Who will you have for nuts in May,  
Nuts in may, nuts in May—  
Who will you have for nuts in May  
On a cold and frosty morning?"

The song goes on with the first line agreeing on a child whom they choose, and so they march forward and then retire, singing—

"We will have (so-and-so) for nuts in May,  
Nuts in May, nuts in May—  
We will have (so-and-so) for nuts in May  
On a cold and frosty morning."

And then the line chooses one they wish to pull away and so, as the song goes on, a child is pulled from one side to the other.

*nutty*

Crazy.

*nuver*

Never.

# O

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## *oak*

A popular and prolific shade tree in the Valley. There are several kinds of oak, the most beautiful perhaps being the white oak, though some people prefer the willow or water oak. There is also the red oak, the blackjack oak and the chestnut oak.

## *oak apple*

oak gall.

## *oak bark*

The inside of oak bark was used to make poultices and teas and tinctures and decoctions for all sorts of diseases. I remember when I had a case of osteomyelitis or "white swelling" (q.v.), one of the remedies proposed by many neighbors was to boil red oak bark and mix with cornmeal to make a poultice. My mother did that. And I used to carry that heavy poultice wrapped around my right arm. For a while it helped me — as long as I thought it did. Then when I realized it didn't, there was no help at all. Mrs. Hockaday at Angier said that one of the reasons I decided it didn't help me was because we failed to get the original bark from the north side of the tree and we should have put sugar in it. Tea from oak bark was also a drink good for a child's diarrhea, and a good preventive for bed sores was to bathe the tender place with water in which the oak bark had been boiled. It was supposed to be good for rheumatism, boils, neuralgia and all sorts of diseases, too.

Great *oaks* from little acorns grow.

## *to put in one's oar*

Push into a matter which is mainly the concern of others, to give gratuitous advice.

## *rest on one's oars*

To loaf, to take things easy.

*oats*

Common small grain. According to the Valley cow doctors, dry oats, if eaten in large quantities, will cause balls of undigested stuff in the stomach of cattle.

*Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley Grow*

A courtship game, also a game of pantomime. The words ran thus:

Oats, peas, beans, and barley grow,  
Oats, peas, beans, and barley grow,  
You nor I nor no one knows  
How oats, peas, beans and barley grow.

Thus the farmer sows his seed.  
Thus he stands and takes his ease.  
He claps his hands, he stamps his foot  
And turns all 'round to view the land.

He's waiting for a partner.  
He's waiting for a partner.  
So open the ring and take her in,  
And kiss her as she enters in.

Now you're married, you must obey,  
Now you're married, you must obey,  
Now you're married, you must obey,  
So take a kiss and walk away.

*wild oats*

Dissolute behavior and doings, youthful folly, usually of a sex sort. Usually to "sow wild oats."

He who cannot *obey* cannot command.

*obleege*

Oblige.

as *obstinate* as a mule

*obstitute*

According to my friend P. B. Wadsworth, "An obstitute would constitute a substitute for a prostitute who was destitute and will restitute in the institute."

*oceans*

A large amount. "Pulling that fodder in July brings out oceans of sweat in the workers — good for them."

***“O Come, All Ye Faithful”***

For more than two hundred years this great Christmas hymn has brightened many a fireside, church and hall. First known in J. F. Ward’s “*Cantus Diversi*” (1751), it was sung in Latin for nearly a hundred years—

“*Adeste fideles laeti triumphantes,  
Venite, venite in Bethlehem.  
Natum videte, Regem angelorum  
Venite adoremus, venite adoremus,  
Venite adoremus Dominum.*”

In 1841 Frederick Oakley made his perfect translation into English.

“O come, all ye faithful,  
Joyful and triumphant.  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold him,  
Born the king of angels.  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ, the Lord.”

***octobers***

Chrysanthemums.

***odd***

Crazy, retarded. “Poor Mis’ Matthews had that odd boy, and he’s a trial and tribulation in church.”

***Odd or Even?***

A guessing game usually played by two people. One will hold his closed hand out in which he has perhaps grains of corn or pennies or some item and asks the other player to guess “odd or even?” If he guesses rightly, then he gets the contents of the hand; if he guesses wrongly, he has to pay the other player one item to make the number match his guess.

***od drat (drot) it!***

A mild expletive.

***odds and ends***

A scattering or collection of little things, a medley of matters.

***ods***

God’s. “Ods daggers and blades, as the play says, take your hand off my leg!”



*Oedipus complex*

According to the Freudian mythology, a fascination-complex for one's mother, usually in terms of a son wanting to have intercourse with his mother. Here is just another of Freud's blasphemous ideas.

*of*

On. "I fell flat of my back."

*off and on*

Vacillating, unsteady, unreliable.

*off base*

Wrong, ignorant of the fact.

If thine eye *offend* thee, pluck it out. If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off.

*offish (stand-offish)*

Cool, aloof, reserved.

*off one's chest*

To speak out, to tell of one's hidden troubles. "Get it off your chest and you'll feel better." This is a good Freudian doctrine even to action, and contrast that with the advice of Samuel Johnson to his friend Boswell. Boswell had written to Johnson in the year 1776 telling him that he was downhearted, had the melancholies, and asked for Johnson's sympathy and advice. Johnson wrote back, "Do not however hope wholly to reason away your troubles; do not feed them with attention, and they will die imperceptibly away. Fix your thoughts upon your business, fill your eatables with company, and sunshine will again break in upon your mind." If this isn't good advice, then my mother and dad were both monkeys. Freud wants a person to lie on a cot session after session and keep telling about his troubles. I've known people who have done that so much and got so hipped on their so-called diseases that they have gone plumb crazy and have had to be shut up in the nut house. Let us hope for an early return of the Sam Johnson good sense in the halls of the psychologists and in the dens of the psychiatrists.

*off one's feed (oats)*

Feeling unwell, without appetite, sickish.

*off one's rocker*

Irrational condition, behavior.

*off the cuff*

Ad lib, extemporaneous, snap judgment.

*off the hook*

Released from a difficult situation or dilemma.

*off the top of my head*

A spur-of-the-moment estimate or comment, a hurried guess.

*off yonder*

Quite a distance away.

*oh baby!*

A mild interjection. Same as oh-boy!

*O dear*, what can the matter be,  
    Johnnie's so long at the fair.  
He promised to bring me a bow of blue ribbon  
    To put in my pretty brown hair.  
    (A recitation rhyme and lyrics to a folk song.)

*Oh, Georgie Buck* is dead.

The last thing he said,  
    Was "Never let a woman have her way."  
    (Negro rhyme proverb.)

*"Oh, John Hardy"*

Another murderer-hero song, often confused both as to tune and words with the epic John Henry of Negro lore. We young farm workers sang it in the fields and in the timber woods, the while we sympathized more with the killer than with the killed.

"Oh, John Hardy was a mean and desperated man.  
    He toted two guns every day.  
He killed him a man in a West Virginia town  
    And now he's gonna hang today, today.  
    Lord, he's gonna hang today.

"John Hardy said, 'Momma, lend me fifty cents.'  
    She said, 'I haven't got any change.'  
'Then hand me down my good old forty-four,  
    I'm gonna blow out my aggervating brains,  
    Lord, blow out my aggervating brains.'

"John Hardy had a purty little wife,  
    The dress she wore it was blue.  
She threw her arms around John Hardy's neck,  
    Said, 'Honey, I've been true to you.  
    Lord, honey, I've been true to you!'

"Now his little loving wife is standing by his side  
    When John Hardy mounts up the scaffold high,

And the very last words they hear John Hardy say  
 Is, 'I'll meet you in the sweet by-and-by,  
 Lord, I'll meet you in the sweet by-and-by.' "

*"Oh Little Liza Jane"*

A jolly piece for Valley group singing and fun.

"I got a house in Baltimore  
 Sixteen stories high  
 And every story in that house  
 Is full of chicken pie,  
 Oh little Liza, little Liza Jane,  
 Oh little Liza, little Liza Jane!

"When I go a-fishing  
 I take my hook and line,  
 But when I go a-courtin'  
 I court this gal o'mine.  
 Oh little Liza, etc.

"You climb up an oak tree,  
 I'll climb up a gum,  
 When I see my Liza,  
 I want to kiss her some.  
 Oh little Liza," etc.

*"Oh, Mary, Don't You Weep, Don't You Mourn"*

This old Negro folk piece was a popular work song, especially for us laborers in the cotton fields.

"Some of these days about twelve o'clock  
 This old world's gonna reel and rock—  
 Pharaoh's army got drowned—  
 Oh, Mary, don't you weep.

"Oh, Mary, don't you weep, don't you mourn.  
 Your son's in heaven with a harp and a horn—  
 Pharaoh's army got drowned—  
 Oh, Mary, don't you weep.

"If I could, I surely would  
 Stand on the rock where Moses stood—  
 Pharaoh's army got drowned—  
 Oh, Mary, don't you weep.

"All you sinners better kneel and pray,  
 'Please, Suh, don't send yo' judgment day'—

Pharaoh's army got drowned—  
Oh, Mary, don't you weep."

*"Oh, My Darling Clementine"*

One of the most popular picnic, hayride, and barbershop quartet pieces the Valley has ever known. Its outlandish story words, like Foster's "Oh Susanna" and many others, seem to have added to its popularity.

"In a cavern, in a canyon  
Excavating for a mine  
Dwelt a miner, forty-niner,  
And his daughter Clementine."

Chorus

"Oh my darling, oh my darling,  
Oh my darling Clementine,  
Thou art lost and gone forever.  
Dreadful sorry, Clementine.

"Light she was and like a fairy  
And her shoes were number nine.  
Herring boxes without topses  
Sandals were for Clementine." (Chorus)

And so on, with an account of how she fell into the foaming brine, "blowing bubbles soft and fine." Then because the lover was no swimmer he lost his Clementine to drown, and she was buried in a churchyard near the canyon "where the myrtle doth entwine" and "the miner, forty-niner,

Soon began to peak and pine,  
Thought he oughter join his daughter.  
Now he's with his Clementine." (Chorus)

"In my dreams she still doth haunt me,  
Robed in garments soaked in brine.  
Though in life I used to hug her,  
Now she's dead, I'll draw the line." (Chorus)

*Oh, my ass!*  
Exclamation.

*Oh, sugar!*  
An exclamation.

*"Oh, Susanna"*

One of Stephen Foster's cherished songs, and one of the Valley favorites for quartets or hayride singing.

It was a singing piece for the forty-niners on their long marching to

the California gold fields. Over the years millions of copies have been sold, but Foster received about \$100 for it, says the *Americana Encyclopedia*, but Jack Burton in his *The Blue Book of Tin Pan Alley* says he received \$10. Either one was a shame and a scandal. As was Foster's custom after his first important composition, "Open Thy Lattice, Love," he wrote his own lyrics. The words for "Oh, Susanna" are of the extravagant nonsense class popularized, for example, by the E. P. Christy blackface minstrels.

"I come from Alabama  
     Wid my banjo on my knee,  
 I'm g'wan to Lou'siana  
     My true love for to see.  
 It rained all night the day I left  
     The weather it was dry,  
 The sun so hot I froze to death,  
     Susanna, don't you cry.  
  
 Oh, Susanna,  
     Don't you cry for me!  
 I come from Alabama  
     Wid my banjo on my knee."

And so even to the unflattering but cherished also—

"De buckwheat cake was in her mouth,  
     De tear was in her eye  
 Says I, I'm coming from de South,  
     Susanna, don't you cry."

### "Oh, the Old Gray Mare"

This is another nonsense song that used to be popular in the Valley at picnics and on hayrides. Also it was a good male quartet number at schoolbreakings.

"Oh, the old gray mare she ain't what she used to be,  
     Ain't what she used to be, ain't what she used to be,  
 Oh, the old gray mare she ain't what she used to be  
     Many long years ago."

Refrain

"Many long years ago  
     Many long years ago.  
 Oh, the old gray mare she ain't what she used to be  
     Many long years ago.

"Oh the old gray mare she kicked o'er the swingletree,  
     Kicked o'er the swingletree, kicked o'er the swingletree,

Oh the old gray mare she kicked o'er the swingletree  
Many long years ago."

As to the other doings of the old gray mare, I found no record.

"*Oh, when* I'm dead, don't bury me at all,  
Just pickle my bones in alcohol,  
Put a bottle of booze at my head and feet  
To tell the world I'm sleeping sweet,  
And a brand new suit and my Stetson hat  
To tell the boys I died standing pat!"  
(A graveyard brag song.)

*Oh yeah!*

A mild expletive expression of disbelief, derision or denial.

*Oil* and water won't mix.

Pour *oil* on troubled waters.

*oiland*

Island.

*oiled*

Liquored up.

*oil on the fire*

To add trouble to trouble, to touch off an explosive situation.

*okay*

The worn-out term of agreement, fine, everything shipshape. It was used, according to H. L. Mencken, as early as 1841.

*okay by me*

I agree.

*okey-doke*

Same as okay.

*okra*

A tall garden plant bearing long pointed green fruit pods. This vegetable is especially popular with Valley people for stews and soups. Also of late the pods cut into bits and fried are found in the restaurants and cafeterias. I've heard my father say, too, that back in the Civil War days folks made mucilage from the slimy ripe pods, and in those hard times the parched seeds were used for coffee along with parched corn grains and peas. In the early days the settlers made dye from the blossoms.

as *old* as Methuselah

as *old* as the hills

as *old* as the itch

An *old* bear is slow in learning to dance.

The *old* make the laws and the young die for them.

*Old* men are twice children.

The *old* must give way to the new.

The *old* order changeth.

An *old* woman's dance is soon over.

Honor the *old*.

You can't teach an *old* dog new tricks.

never too *old* to learn

### *old and young*

A folk superstition. Old people and young people should not sleep together, for the old ones take the strength away from the young.

### *Old Bad Boy*

The devil. He is also called Old Davy, Old Harry, Old Ned, Old Nick, Old Roger, Old Scratch, etc. Sometimes he is even called The Old Black Man.

### *old bag*

An old woman.

### *Old Billy Buck*

A child's guessing game. One child puts his head in another's lap and as his back is slapped rhythmically, the slapper says, "Old Billy Buck, try your luck, how many fingers do I hold up?" And the child with his head down guesses. If he guesses correctly, then the two change places, but if he guesses incorrectly, say three fingers are held up and the guess is two, then the rhyme goes on. "Two you said, and three it was, Old Billy Buck, try your luck." And so on.

### *old bird*

An experienced criminal.

### *"Old Black Joe"*

Stephen Foster's immortal tribute to a black friend. This Joe was a real person. He drove Dr. Andrew McDowell's buggy for many years, serving in addition as yard man, butler and general factotum. Dr. McDowell was the father of Jane McDowell, "Jeanie with the light brown hair," Foster's

boyhood sweetheart and later his wife.

Mrs. Jessie Welsh Rose, a granddaughter of the McDowells, in her reminiscences, published in *The Pittsburgh Post* in 1926, says of Joe, “In the evenings he pottered, as grandma expressed it, around the house and felt all dressed up in an old blue coat with brass buttons on the tails — the coat only doing duty when Joe ‘buddled’ in the house. He loved ‘his family’ dearly and when the beaux of the period brought their stiff starched bouquets to the McDowell girls, five of them living, no one was more intensely pleased than Joe. Grandma recalled him shuffling down the hall carrying a bouquet behind his back, his countenance shining with delight, and calling in a pleased voice ‘Miss Jinny! Miss Jinny! Come see what I have for you!’ When dusk came, Joe lit the candles and lamps — laid the logs in the fireplace and waited upon the door. All through the sweetheart days Joe watched Foster come and go. The two became great friends. ‘Someday I’m going to put you in a song, Joe,’ Foster told him and felt in his heart that it was a promise. The old man was gone when the day of fulfillment came, but today and perhaps always ‘Old Black Joe’ lives again.

“There is one remembrance that comes to me at this writing, and that is how inseparably the song ‘Old Black Joe’ was associated in my grandmother’s mind with her own life and family. It was the one song we couldn’t sing in Grandma’s hearing during her last years. It brought back days of unforgettable happiness among those she had loved and lost, and left her always in tears.”

“Gone are the days when my heart was young and gay,  
Gone are the friends from the cotton fields away,  
Gone from the earth to a better land I know,  
I hear their gentle voices calling ‘Old Black Joe.’  
I’m coming, I’m coming, for my head is bending low.  
I hear their gentle voices calling ‘Old Black Joe.’  
I’m coming, I’m coming, for my head is bending low.  
I hear their gentle voices calling ‘Old Black Joe.’ ”

### *old buck*

A common name for an aged ram or steer.

### *old cat die*

Allowing the rope or porch swing to come to a natural stop.

### *Old Christmas*

Twelfth Night, Epiphany, January 6. In some places in North Carolina it is still celebrated, especially on the Outer Banks. It used to be celebrated in the Valley, but I haven’t heard of such for several years.



*Old coon* for cunning,  
Young coon for running.

***“Old Dan Tucker”***

A play-party song. The tune is a prime favorite also at fiddlers' conventions. The piece was sung in minstrel shows as early as 1841, says Vance Randolph in his *Ozark Folksongs* (four volumes). It is credited to that Ohio native, Dan Emmett, who wrote the Southern national anthem, “Dixie.”

In the game the players, boys and girls, choose partners. They then form a circle, holding hands. “It,” an additional boy, is “Old Dan,” and he stands in the center of the circle. The music — fiddle and banjo usually — strikes up and the players sing.

“Old Dan Tucker’s come to town,  
Swinging the ladies all around.  
First to the right and then to the left  
And choose the one that you love best.”

At the words “First to the right,” “Old Dan” has the privilege of pulling a girl out into the ring by the right hand, thrusting her back into her place again, and on the words “and then to the left” he pulls a girl out by the left hand and thrusts her back as before. Of course there are breaks in the singing, while the turning and thrusting back are taking place, the music continuing the while. At the words, “And then to the one that you love best,” each boy swings his own partner. During the swinging “Old Dan” tries to snatch a girl for himself. If he succeeds, the boy who loses his partner becomes “Old Dan.”

**Refrain**

“Get out’n the way, Old Dan Tucker,  
Get out’n the way, Old Dan Tucker,  
Get out’n the way, Old Dan Tucker—  
You’re too late to get your supper.

“Old Dan Tucker’s a son of a bitch,  
He got drunk and fell in a ditch.  
Old Dan Tucker he got drunk,  
Fell in the fire and kicked out a chunk.  
Get out’n the way, Old Dan Tucker—

“Old Dan Tucker’s a fine old man,  
Washed his face in the frying pan,  
Combed his head with a wagon wheel,  
Died with the toothache in his heel.  
Get out’n the way, Old Dan Tucker—”

And so on with more nonsense words and rollicking joy.

### *Old Dead Sheep*

A catch. One speaker starts off by saying, "I saw an old dead sheep." The second answers, "I one it." And it goes on, "I two it," next "I three it," next "I four it," next "I five it," next "I six it," next "I seven it," next "I eight (ate) it." Then the children go off into gales of laughter.

### *Old Doctor Foster*

He went to Glo'cester  
To preach the word of God.  
When he got there,  
He sat on a chair,  
And gave all the people a nod.  
(Nursery rhyme.)

### *old fields*

Fields that have been allowed to lie fallow, usually growing up in loblolly pines.

### *old foggy*

One who has got out of the mainstream of things or has old-fashioned ideas.

### *"Old Folks at Home"*

Perhaps Stephen Foster's most beloved song. It is often called "Way Down Upon the Swanee River," though the composer never saw this river. E. P. Christy, "the minstrel king," paid Foster \$15 for it and for years claimed it as his own composition. Morrison Foster, Stephen's older brother, tells the story of the song's composition. "One day in 1851," he recounts, "Stephen came into my office on the bank of the Monongahela, Pittsburgh, and said to me, 'What is a good name of two syllables for a Southern river? I want to use it in this new song of "Old Folks at Home." I asked him how Yazoo would do. 'Oh,' said he, 'that has been used before.' I then suggested Pedee. 'Oh, pshaw,' he replied, 'I won't have that.' I then took down an atlas from the top of my desk and opened the map of the United States. We both looked over it and my finger stopped at the 'Swanee,' a little river in Florida emptying into the Gulf of Mexico. 'That's it, that's it exactly,' exclaimed he delighted, as he wrote the name down; and the song was finished, commencing, "Way Down Upon de Swanee Ribber." He left the office, as was his custom, abruptly, without saying another word, and I resumed my work."

Foster's original lyric of "Old Folks at Home" shows that his first title, as he entered it in his notebook, was "Way down upon de old plantation." The first verse was:

“Way down upon de Pedee ribber  
 Far, far away  
 Dere’s where my heart is turning ebber  
 Dere’s wha my brudders play.”

“Pedee” was crossed out, and “Swanee” written just above it:

Swanee  
 “Way down upon de ~~Pedee~~ ribber  
 Far, far away  
 Dere’s where my heart is turning ebber  
 Dere’s where de old folks stay.”

Many music historians agree that save for one or two national anthems, such as “The Marseillaise,” “Old Folks at Home” is the most popular and widely loved song ever written. It has been translated into every European language and into many Asian and African tongues. Millions of people the world over, including Communist countries, have sung it and continue to sing it.

*old hand*

An experienced person, an expert.

*old hat*

Old stuff, a worn-out matter.

*Old Horny*

The devil.

*old hoss*

An intimate and jocular form of address, usually from man to man.

*“Old Hundred”*

See “Doxology.”

*how old is Anne?*

A question that can’t be answered.

*“Old Joe Clark”*

A play-party piece and almost as popular as “Old Dan Tucker” for both fiddling and dancing.

“I went down to old Joe Clark’s.  
 He was sick in bed,  
 Run my finger down his throat  
 And pulled out a chicken head.  
 “Round and round old Joe Clark,

Round and round I say—  
Round and round old Joe Clark,  
I ain't got long to stay.

“Old Joe Clark killed a man,  
Buried him in the sand.  
Old Joe Clark's gonna be hung,  
Ain't no other man.

“Round and round, old Joe Clark,” etc.

“Old Joe Clark's dead and gone—  
I hope he's doing well,  
Wearing stripes and the ball and chain,  
Way down there in hell.”

“Round and round,” etc.

*Old King Cole* was a merry old soul,  
And a merry old soul was he.  
He called for his pipe and he called for his bowl  
And he called for his fiddlers three.

And every fiddler, he had a fine fiddle,  
And a very fine fiddle had he, etc.  
(A nursery rhyme.)

*“O Little Town of Bethlehem”*

Another favorite Valley Christmas carol and popular especially on our Christmas serenadings. The melody was composed by one Lewis H. Redner. I've tried to trace him but failed. The words were written by that brilliant young Episcopal bishop of Massachusetts, Phillips Brooks, whose promising church career ended in his too-early death at 38. I can still recall the wonderful snug feeling some of the words of this beautiful carol gave me at Christmas when I was young. And if one of our rare snows had fallen at the time, the feeling was almost heavenly—

“O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie;  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.”

*“Old MacDonald Had A Farm”*

One of those tantalizing memory-testing nonsense songs. It was always popular at our play-parties, picnics, and hayrides. The imitated noises used to throw us into stitches and sometimes the roll call of animals and fowl with their imitated sounds grew so hilarious we had to stop and change to another song or game.

Old MacDonald had a farm,  
 E-I-E-I-O,  
 And on that farm he had some ducks,  
 E-I-E-I-O,  
 With a quack, quack (imitate) here  
 And a quack, quack there,  
 Here a quack and there a quack  
 And everywhere a quack, quack—  
 Old MacDonald had a farm,  
 E-I-E-I-O!

Then other animals and fowl would be added, but each time the singers had to start at the beginning and include them all in succession. I always fell out after three or four were named — chicks, pigs, turkeys (“with a gobble, gobble here”), cows, mules (“with a bray, bray here”), sheep (“with a baa—baa here”), dogs, and so on — as many as could be remembered.

*old man*

The boss, husband or father, and an affectionate form of address even to a young man. Also reference to the penis.

*Old Man Hypocrite*

We used to play this with a leader protecting the children. One player, the old man, would come along hopping by the help of his stick and crying out a pitiful cry, “Old Man Hypocrite.” And we would ask, “What’s the matter?” He would repeat “Old Man Hypocrite.” And he would go pitifully by us and then all of a sudden turn and try to catch one of us. Much the same as Hawk and Chickens.

*old man's beard*

The flowering ash, also called fringe tree. The white beard or fringe of this beautiful tree — perhaps rather a shrub since it rarely grows higher than twenty feet — appears in early spring even before the leaves of the other trees have thickened. Its white beard can be seen here and there in the woods, and its heavenly smell fills the air. It is a showy tree and is often planted by Valley people for ornamentation. Its time of flowering is early April to early May. It grows best in damp land and along stream banks, the botanists say. But the many I have planted around our house thrive mightily, though

we live on a hill.

In the old days the settlers chewed the roots and swallowed the juice, saying it added to their sexual powers. The high birthrate in the Valley — up to recent years — might give credence to this superstition. But I doubt there has ever been any need here for such help. It was also used for bronchial infections. See “Spanish moss” also.

*Old Molly Hare*, whatcha doing there?

Running through the cotton patch hard as I can tear.

Rabbit in the cornfield eating all the peas.

Milk cow, bell cow a-kicking up her heels.

Oh, Mr. Rabbit, your ears are mighty long—

Yes, by God, for they put 'em on wrong.

Oh, Mr Rabbit, your tail's mighty white.

Say so, 'tis so, and I'm getting out of sight.

(Animal jingle.)

*Old Moster*

God.

*Old Mother Hubbard*

Went to the cupboard

To get her poor dog a bone,

When she got there,

The cupboard was bare,

And so the poor dog got none.

(A nursery rhyme.)

*Old Mother Twitchett* has but one eye

And a long tail which she can let fly,

And every time she goes through a gap

She leaves a bit of her tail in a trap.

(Riddle. - A threaded needle.)

*Old Ned*

The devil or a high temper.

*Old Nick*

The devil.

“*Old Ninety-seven*”

The wreck of this Southern Railway train became the subject of one of our most popular ballads. The accident described in the song-ballad occurred on September 27, 1903. The mail train Number 97 was running from Washington, D.C. to Atlanta, Georgia, and was some forty minutes late.

It picked up speed and in rounding a curve jumped the tracks just north of Danville, Virginia. It fell into a ravine and the engineer and crew were killed. Being a mail train only, there were no passengers aboard. Before long, ballads were out and the one written to the tune of "The Ship That Never Returned" caught on best. My brother and I used to sing it over and over as we grubbed up roots in the newground or chopped out the grassy cotton.

"On a bright Sunday morning in Washington City  
Just at the rising of the sun  
Steve Brodie kissed his wife, saying, 'Children, God bless you,  
Your daddy's got to go on his run.'

"They give him his orders in Monroe, Virginia,  
Saying, 'Steve, you're way behind time.  
This is not Thirty-eight but it's old Ninety-seven,  
And you've got to put her into Danville on time.'

"It's a mighty rough road from Lynchburg to Danville  
And a line on a three-mile grade.  
It was on this grade that he lost his airbrake—  
Just see what a run he made.

"He was coming down the hill making ninety miles an hour  
When his whistle broke into a scream.  
He was found in the wreck with his hand on the throttle—  
He was scalded to death in the steam."

### *"The Old Oaken Bucket"*

This was another favorite song with our male quartet in the old days, and it was likewise popular at picnics and on hayrides. The description in the song of the old oaken bucket that hung in the well didn't quite fit our well bucket. Ours was too much in use providing water for the family and for the mules, hogs and cows ever to get any moss on it. But we loved the song anyway — words and melody — for its honoring this humble and yet most necessary farm utensil.

"How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood,  
When fond recollection presents them to view!  
The orchard, the meadow, the deep tangled wildwood,  
And ev'ry loved spot which my infancy knew.

"The wide-spreading pond and the mill that stood by it,  
The bridge and the rock where the cataract fell,  
The cot of my father, the dairy house nigh it,  
And e'en the rude bucket that hung in the well.

The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,  
The moss-covered bucket that hung in the well."

An *old person's funeral* brings rain.

*old rail*

Syphilis.

*Old Reliable*

A term applied to *The News and Observer*. This Raleigh paper founded by Josephus Daniels nearly a hundred years ago is a solid supporter of the Democratic party. It covers the Valley like a blanket, says Lonnie Cofield, and thousands of subscribers there speak proudly of it as "The Old Reliable," and it is that, being delivered to its subscribers daily and without fail, come hell or high water, freeze or flood, and, like Sears and Roebuck catalog, having in addition to its reading other practical uses. My father subscribed to the paper as long as I can remember, and I can still hear him saying to a neighbor, "I see in the paper where—" the statement to follow having the ring of authority because it had appeared in print. Sometimes the introductory phrase was shorter, being simply "I see where—", this meaning the same. I have followed in the footsteps of my father and am a constant subscriber to "The Old Reliable." I have always had a special affection for this paper and for its later editor, Jonathan Daniels, son of the founder, and I look back with joyous memory to the first little piece of writing I ever published — a small corn field yearning lyric which was printed in it. Way back, Lord, Lord, how many years!

And it is especially close to me also because through it a dear friend of mine was rescued from a drunkard's grave.

This friend was a rising young merchant in my hometown, happily married and with three fine children. Everybody prophesied a successful career for him. But somehow in the midst of all his stable and successful doings, he took to drink. As time passed he drank more and more, and finally became a sot drunkard, and his business went to pieces. It got so that he would lie up soused in bed all day long, and then late at night would lonesomely wander the streets of the town. Many a time he would be poking around as the dawn came up, and then as the sun began to show its spangled glory in the east, he would make his way home to his bottle and to bed again, as if ashamed to meet any of his neighbors abroad or feel the sun in his face.

It happened in some of his late wanderings he ran into the early morning "Old Reliable" delivery man. They struck up acquaintance and my friend often would get into the pick-up truck with him and ride about delivering the paper from door to door.

Once or twice to help out, when he was in shape to, he would drive the pick-up while the delivery man on rainy mornings would be wrapping



up each individual paper in a protective covering.

Well, to make a long story short, he got more and more interested in helping to deliver "The Old Reliable" and once when the delivery man was ill he took over delivering the paper that day himself. Some of his friends helped him get a pick-up truck of his own, and he finally became "The Old Reliable" delivery man in that region.

As he became more dependable, he drank less and less and finally stopped altogether. Once he said to me, "Paul, I reckon what really saved me was a sort of selfish prideful feeling that came to me when I would be driving around delivering the paper, thinking of all the people snoozing away in their houses, many of them lazy and lying there and me out serving them, fixing it so that they could have their paper with their morning coffee and maybe thankful to the fellow that delivered it. And then too what helped was the fact that *The News and Observer* folks in Raleigh trusted me."

Before too long my friend was back in the church, back as a member in good standing in the Chamber of Commerce, a good member of Rotary, and admired and respected as once he was.

Now when you go through the town you will see his big and thriving department store there in the middle of the main block with his name spread in big letters across it. His children are all being educated, the son is a student at the University at Chapel Hill, and the eldest girl is entering St. Mary's next year.

Yes, a lot of us are mighty thankful to "The Old Reliable," sometimes jocularly referred to as "The Nuisance and Disturber."

The term also refers to the penis.

*old salt*

An experienced sailor, an old follower of the sea.

*Old Scratch*

The devil.

*old shoe*

A common thing or person, something very plain, same as old hat.

*old so-and-so*

A term of opprobrium, usually equal to old son of a bitch.

*old soldier*

An experienced military man, also an empty bottle or cigar stub.

*old son (old squirt, old thing)*

A jocular and affectionate form of greeting between men.

*old sore*

An ancient grudge.

*Old Split Foot*

The devil.

*old stick-in-the-mud*

A very dull or staid person.

*old stuff*

Out-of-date news or argument.

*old timer*

A jocular and intimate form of address, also refers to an old settler or pioneer.

*“Old Time Religion”*

A rousing camp-meeting hymn that stands against smart-alecky new preachers and sings out the old, old solid stuff. The original title was “’Tis the Old Time Religion,” but we children always sang it as “Gimme that old time religion.” It is found in many of the old hymn books but rarely in the new ones. Its authorship is unknown. The famous Fisk Jubilee Singers used it in their tours at home and abroad.

“Gimme that old time religion (repeat two times more)

It’s good enough for me.

It was good for our mothers (repeat two times)

It’s good enough for me.”

In subsequent stanzas we substituted for the third line any — and sometimes all — of the following—

“Makes me love everybody —”

“It has saved our father —”

“It was good for the prophet Daniel —”

“It was good for the Hebrew children —”

“It was tried in the fiery furnace —”

“It was good for Paul and Silas —”

“It will do when I am dying —”

“It will take me home to heaven.”

The list can continue if one wishes but heaven seems a good stopping place.

*“Old Ship of Zion”*

This is a typical representation of old hymns and spirituals. It was first published, so far as I can find out, as early as 1830. It often goes under the title, “She’ll Be Coming Round the Mountain.” We sang it and sang it.

“The old ship of Zion, when she comes, when she comes,”

This is repeated four times, thus constituting the full first stanza, then it takes off with—

“She’ll be coming round the mountain when she comes,” and so on, and continuing with—

“She’ll be driving six white horses when she comes,”

“We’ll kill the old red rooster when she comes.”

The list of actions can be as long as one wishes to make it.

### *old timey curative procedures*

Many a good strong man died in the old days from too much bleeding prescribed by the doctors. (Cf. George Washington.) As a child I remember seeing Dr. Joe McKay, our long-suffering family doctor, bleed my father. He made a little cut in his back, applied a suction cup to the cut and drew out half a cupful of blood. “You’ll feel better now, Billy,” he said. “I already feel better, Joe,” my father said.

There were four main methods of treatment in the early days — by induced puking, by purging, bleeding and sweating. Some of the doctors were hardboiled. Their attitude was expressed in the old acrimonious rhyme which was once current in the Valley as to their patients—

“Puke ’em, purge ’em,  
Bleed ’em, sweat ’em,  
If they die,  
Then damnit let ’em!”

### *“Old Uncle Ned”*

Another of Stephen Foster’s heart-warming darky minstrel pieces. Mrs. Evelyn Foster Monneweck in her *Chronicles of Stephen Foster’s Family* quotes Stephen Foster’s older brother Morrison as to Foster’s creation of “Old Uncle Ned.”

“In 1845, a club of young men, friends of his, met twice a week at our house to practice songs in harmony under his leadership. They were J. Cust Blair, Andrew L. Robinson, J. Harvey Davis, Robert P. McDowell and myself. At that time, negro melodies were very popular. After we had sung over and over again all the songs then in favor, he proposed that he would try and make some for us himself. His first effort was called ‘The Louisiana Belle.’ A week after this, he produced the famous song of ‘Old Uncle Ned.’ ‘Uncle Ned’ immediately became known and popular everywhere. Both the words and melody are remarkable. At the time he wrote ‘His fingers were long like de cane in de brake,’ he had never seen a cane brake, nor ever been below the mouth of the Ohio river, but the appropriateness of the simile instantly strikes everyone who has traveled down the Mississippi.”

“Dere was an old darky, dey called him Uncle Ned,  
He’s dead long ago, long ago.

He had no wool on de top of his head,  
De place whar de wool ought to grow.  
Den lay down de shubble and de hoe,  
Hang up de fiddle and de bow.  
No more work for poor old Ned,  
He's gone whar de good darkies go."

*old wife's tongue*

The quivering (quaking) aspen.

*old woman*

The midwife. In the old days the old woman or midwife did most of the baby delivering. And of course there were many infections and deaths from childbed fever.

*old woman picking her geese*

Snow falling.

*olive branch*

Rainbow, a token of peace.

*'oman*

Woman.

*'omi Wise*

The murder of Noami Wise has long been a ballad subject in North Carolina. Our quartet used to sing it, having learned it from the Valley historian, Mr. Mac. The first copy of the ballad, music and words, I ever saw I got from a street hawker in Chapel Hill. I was a freshman at the University and was the happy recipient of a five-dollar gold piece won in a short story contest. At a meeting in old Hill Hall, John Washburn, who was from my hometown of Lillington and was president of the senior class, made the award. Walking along Franklin Street shortly after this I met up with the hawker who was calling out his song books and ballads. He announced to the air he had the pitiful song of poor 'Omi Wise with him, "Twenty-five cents!" I didn't have twenty-five cents, but I had a five-dollar gold piece. Right off I bought the ballad. He changed the gold piece, and we both parted happy. The ballad tells 'Omi's story clearly enough and there's no need here for a different stating.

"Come all good people, I'd have you draw near,  
A sorrowful story you quickly shall hear;  
A story I'll tell you of poor 'Omi Wise,  
How she was deluded by Lewis's lies.

"He promised to marry and use her quite well;  
But conduct contrary I sadly must tell,

He promised to meet her at Adam's spring;  
He promised her marriage and many a fine thing.

"Still nothing he gave her but flattered the case.  
He says 'We'll be married and have no disgrace,  
Come get up behind me, we'll go in to town.  
And there we'll be married, in union be bound.'

"She got up behind him and straight he did go  
To the bank of Deep River where the water did flow;  
He says 'Now, poor 'Omi, I'll tell you my mind,  
I intend here to drown you and leave you behind.'

" 'O pity your infant and spare me my life  
Let me go rejected, and not be your wife.'  
'No pity, no pity,' this monster did cry,  
'In Deep River's bottom your body shall lie!'

"The wretch then did choke her, as we understand,  
And threw her in the river below the milldam;  
Be it murder or treason, O! What a great crime,  
To drown poor 'Omi and leave her behind.

"Poor 'Omi was missing, they all did well know,  
And hunting for her to the river did go,  
And there found her floating in the water so deep,  
Which caused all the people to moan and to weep.

"The neighbors were sent for to see the great sight,  
While she lay floating all that long night;  
So early next morning the inquest was held;  
The jury correctly the murder did tell."

Jonathan Lewis was arrested and lodged in jail. But he escaped and fled to the midwest. Years passed. It was finally rumored that he was living at the Falls of the Ohio. Officers were sent and he was arrested, brought back and tried. The verdict was "not guilty." Too much time had passed. On his deathbed, however, he confessed to having slain 'Omi and, according to a folklore account, he repeated her pleas for help. With his face drawn in contortions and "the death rattle in his throat," he described her actions as she learned that she was going to her Maker instead of to her husband.

There is a spot marked on a stone just below the old milldam and also near the old Naomi Ford that is said to be where the footprint of the young woman was found the morning after her drowning. More than one Negro reports seeing her ghost hovering around the place.

*on*

Indefinite time. "She'll stay on, I hear."

About, concerning. "The preacher preached on the forgiveness of sin."

*on a high horse*

To be excited, unduly angry.

*on and off*

Now and then. "He's sober on and off."

*on a string*

To have control of. "That girl's got old P. J. on a string and he a married man at that."

*on cloud nine*

Highly exhilarated, happy.

*on edge*

Nervous, irritable.

*once*

This time, one time. "For the once I'll let you go," said the judge.

*once and occasionally*

Sometime, now and then. "I once and occasionally catches a rabbit in my gum."

*Once bitten*, twice shy.

*once in a blue moon*

Very rarely, hardly ever.

*once over*

A quick glance or quick, half-finished job.

*one*

Used for emphasis. "I'll be there Monday or Tuesday one." "The law will get that boy or I will one."

One or the other, either. "The brush have got to be hauled off, so take the truck or pick-up one."

*One* at a time, they last longer.

*One* bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

*One* half the world knows not how the other half lives.

*One* man's meat is another man's poison.

*One* may say too much even upon the best subject.

*One* of these days is none of these days.

*on edge*

Nervous, irritable.

*“One Fishball”*

One of those silly popular songs, and popular because they are silly — and of course one must always allow for a good singable tune to go with them. The “Fishball” song is still popular with my wife and was much sung by her father and all the Lay children. It also tells a story.

“There was a man went up and down  
To seek a dinner on the town.

“He feels his cash to know his pence.  
And finds he has but just six cents.

“He finds at last a right cheap place  
And enters in with modest face.

“The bill of fare he searches through  
To see what his six cents will do.

“The cheapest serving of them all  
Is twelve and a half cents for two fishball.

“Then to the waiter he doth call,  
And gently whispers — ‘One fishball.’

“The waiter roars it through the hall,  
The guests they start at ‘One fishball!’

“The guest then says, quite ill at ease,  
‘A piece of bread, sir, if you please.’

“The waiter roars it through the hall,  
‘We don’t give bread with one fishball!’ ”

*one foot in the grave and the other edging up*

To be very old, senile.

*one foot in the stirrup*

On the verge of, ready to spring into action.

*one for the birds*

A foolish comment, a mistrusted promise, a statement of derision.

*One for the money,*

Two for the show,

Three to make ready,

And four to go.

(A game rhyme.)

We boys used to recite this as we stood with extended pointed hands ready to jump into the old swimming place in Middle Prong Creek, and at the word "go," in we would dive.

*one gallus*

Poor, ignorant.

*one-horse*

Small, feeble, unimportant. "Joshua Jones has got just that little ol' one-horse farm and he and his wife and children are 'bout to starve to death."

*One hour's* sleep before midnight is worth two hours after.

*One I Love*

A divination rhyme. Sometimes we used appleseeds or orange seeds or anything that would suit. And sometimes we would take holly leaves and touch the points of the leaf or pull daisy petals as we would recite the rhyme:

One, I love,

Two, I love,

Three, I love I say.

Four, I love with all my heart,

And five, I cast away.

Six, he loves,

Seven, she loves,

Eight, they both love.

Nine, he comes,

Ten, he tarries,

Eleven, he courts,

Twelve, he marries.

Thirteen wishes.

Fourteen kisses,

And all the rest are little witches.

And sometimes we would say the last line, "And all the rest are little switches," or "great long switches."

*one more man*

A man of powerful frame or muscular strength. "That Jim Jones, I tell you, is one more man."



*one of the boys*

A crony, a hail-fellow-well-met.

*one of these (those) days*

An indefinite time.

A hectic time. "I'm exhausted — it's been one of those days."

*one on him*

A fact or point charged against a person.

*one potato*

A counting out rhyme.

*one's cup of tea*

Preference, choice, satisfying. "That parade was my cup of tea."

*by oneself*

Alone.

*one-sided*

Unfair.

*one storey and a jump*

A house with one and a half stories.

*I tell you one thing*

A preparatory phrase for an emphatic statement to follow.

*One thing at a time*

And that done well

Is a very good rule

As many can tell.

*One today* is worth two tomorrows.

*One, two, buckle my shoe,*

Three, four, shut the door,

Five, six, pick up sticks,

Seven, eight, lay them straight,

Nine, ten, a good fat hen,

Eleven, twelve, roast her well,

Thirteen, fourteen, girls a-courting,

Fifteen, sixteen, girls a-fixing,

Seventeen, eighteen, girls a-waiting,

Nineteen, twenty, brides a-plenty.

(A game rhyme.)

There are other variations of this rhyme especially in the last few lines. For instance:

Seventeen, eighteen, girls a-waiting,  
Nineteen, twenty, my plate's empty.

Or, again:

Seventeen, eighteen, ladies a-waiting,  
Nineteen, twenty, goodies a-plenty.

Still another variation of this I have heard:

One, two, three, four,  
Five, six, seven,  
All good children go to heaven.  
All the bad ones go below  
To keep company with Old Black Joe.

*one up*

A point or score ahead.

*One white foot*, buy him,  
Two white feet, try him,  
Three white feet, look well about him,  
Four white feet, do without him.

(A wisdom rhyme in reference to horses or mules.)

*on hand*

To have in one's possession or near by. "Heck Green's always got money on hand."

*onion*

The ordinary and common garden vegetable, and there are many folk beliefs concerning it. For instance, it used to be believed that an onion kept in the room of a typhoid patient would prevent the nurse from catching the disease. One person reported that she had found a plate of onions under the bed and cabbage leaves tied around the wrists and ankles and bound to the head of the patient who was sick of typhoid fever. Also onions chewed and taken internally or sliced up and tied around the afflicted limb were thought to be good for rheumatism. Another belief was that one could keep off contagious diseases of any sort by wearing an onion tied around his neck or kept in his pocket. Some have told me that the best onion for this is a red onion, that the white onion lacks the power. And of course all of us have heard that eating onions is one of the best cures for a cold. There is the common rhyme:

An apple a day keeps the doctor away,  
An onion a day keeps everybody away.

Also the head. "He's got a good onion on his shoulders."

*onion juice*

A good remedy for earache.

*onions*

Business, prospects, plans. "He knows his onions all right." And recently I heard a neighbor say, "You know, Terry Sanford certainly knew his onions when he was Governor."

*feel one's onions*

To be in high spirits, full of pep.

*onless*

Unless.

*onliest*

Only. "This is the onliest dollar I've got left."

*on needles and pins*

To be nervous, have the fidgets, to be full of apprehension, uncertainty.

*on one's ear*

In disgrace, knocked for a loop.

*on one's feet*

To be in good physical or financial shape. "Joe's back on his feet again after getting busted by the stock market."

*on one's last legs*

The last support, defense, weakening.

*on one's neck*

A burden. "He's a sorry character to have on your neck."

*on one's own*

Individual responsibility.

*on one's own hook*

On one's own responsibility.

*'on't*

Won't.

*on the ball*

Up to scratch, watchful, wary, authoritative, full of know-how.

*on the beam*

To the point, no lost motion.

*on the blink*

Broken, out of repair.

*on the dodge*

Hiding away from the law, playing hide and seek with a subpoena server.

*on the dot*

Prompt.

*on the drift*

Idling, wasting one's time, misspending one's life.

*on the fence*

Undecided, unable to choose.

*on the go*

To be busy, traveling about, moving in a hurry, energetically working. "She's on the go from morning to night."

*on the hip*

In an advantageous position or to have the advantage over one's opponent.

*on the hook*

To be in a dilemma, in a precarious and unhappy situation.

*on the left foot*

Non-conforming, out of line.

*on the level*

Honest, frank.

*on the loose*

Free, libidinous.

*on the mend*

Convalescing.

*on the money*

On the mark, accurate.

*on the nose*

On target, exactly.

*on the q.t.*

Confidentially, secretly.

*on the rag*

Menstruating.

*on the ragged edge*

On the point of disaster, in a precarious situation.

*on the stick*

Stuck.

*on the up and up*

Honest, fair, also to be progressing.

*on the warpath*

To be angry, ready to fight.

*on tick*

On credit.

*ontie*

Untie.

*“On Top of Old Smoky”*

A popular love ballad.

*on top of the world*

In first-rate shape, feeling fine or very happy.

*“Onward, Christian Soldiers”*

This militant marching hymn in the cause of Christ is popular throughout the western evangelical world. For a hundred years and more it has been a standby in the Valley. The words are by The Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould and the original music was composed by Henry Gauntlet. In 1871 Arthur Sullivan composed the present melody which everybody sings. The old one is forgot.

“Onward, Christian soldiers,  
 Marching as to war,  
 With the cross of Jesus  
 Going on before.  
 Christ the royal Master  
 Leads against the foe,  
 Forward into battle,  
 See His banners go.”

Refrain

“Onward, Christian soldiers,  
 Marching as to war,  
 With the cross of Jesus  
 Going on before.”

Francis Archer Jones in his book, *Famous Hymns and Their Authors*, gives an interesting account of the origin of this hymn. It was originally written for children. The author, Rev. Baring-Gould, wrote it for his mission at Horbury Bridge. "Here the children," says Jones, "had to march many a long mile to take part in what is dear to the heart of every true child — a school feast. Owing to the distance from the church to the scene of the festivities, an early start was necessary, and marching in procession with banners waving, colours flying, and a cross preceding them, the little ones sang lustily all the way. It was for these processions that "Onward, Christian Soldiers" was written, and though it is many a year since Mr. Baring-Gould led those enthusiastic little pilgrims of Horbury Bridge, it is not improbable that the hymn is as great a favourite among the newer generation there as it was thirty-five years ago. It was then sung to Gauntlet's tune, for Sullivan had not then composed that stirring march which would have made his name popular had he never written another note. In connection with Sullivan's setting, which he christened 'St. Gertrude,' it is interesting to learn that after writing it the composer remarked that he was afraid that it would be too 'brassy' and martial for church singing. He was more than surprised at its popularity.

"Rather a good story is told in connection with this hymn, which may or may not be true," Jones continues. "It is related that a certain rather low church vicar, though he liked processions, particularly when he headed them, stoutly objected to the cross being carried. The organist and the choirmaster both did their best to persuade him that there was nothing wrong in carrying a cross, but they might just as well have addressed their remarks to his pulpit. The vicar was adamant. At last, losing all patience, the choirmaster altered the first verse, and the procession began their march round the church to the words —

'Onward, Christian soldiers,  
Marching as to war,  
With the cross of Jesus  
Left behind the door.' "

*on you*

In one's possession, ready. "You haven't got a pencil on you, have you?"

*oodles*

A great deal, a vast number.

*oodles and gads*

Murgins, a bountiful supply.

*oops-a-daisy*

A joyous exclamation, usually when one is playing with a child, tossing the

little fellow and saying as he goes up, "Oops-a-daisy." Sometimes it is Ups-a-daisy.

*ooze* (out)

Ease. "God oozed old Beelzebub out of heaven."

*oozlings*

Oozings.

*open*

To place the first bet as in a poker game.

*open and aboveboard*

To be honest and fair in one's dealings, to be truthful, frank.

*openhearted*

Generous, kind, affectionate.

*open heifer*

A loose young woman.

*open one's mouth too wide*

To promise more than one can fulfill.

*open up the big blade*

Do things in a big way, splurge.

*open sow*

A sow left unspayed and kept for breeding.

*Open the Gates*

A tug of war game. Two children raise their hands up and form a sort of arch and then the others march under it, singing. At the signal point in the song the two drop their hands over and catch a marching player, who then is allowed to choose either "the sun" or "the moon," which are the names of the two holding up their arms. The one who chooses gets behind that leader, and when the players are all lined up, a tug of war follows. It is somewhat like London Bridge. There are various versions of the song they sing as they march.

"Open the gates as high as the sky  
And let King George's man pass by.  
Give him a lamp to light him to bed  
Give him a hatchet to chop off his head."

On the word "chop" the two lower their hands to catch the player. Of course, when the two wish, they may delay the song and catch whom they wish.

*open weather*

Fine weather.

*open winter*

A warm winter without much snow.

*Open your mouth* and shut your eyes,  
I'll give you something to make you wise.  
Shut your eyes and open your mouth,  
I'll give you something comes from the south.  
Shut your eyes and open your hand,  
I'll give you something make you feel grand.  
(A catch rhyme.)

*opium poppy*

A decorative plant grown in a number of housewives' gardens but I have never heard of opium being used by any Valley housewife.

*opodeldocs*

Spirits of fun, sometimes spelled opidildocs.

*Opportunity* knocks but once.

*Opportunity* makes the thief.

*Opportunity* never knocks twice.

Seize the handle of *opportunity*.

*opossum*

Of course, we always pronounced it 'possum.

*orange blossoms*

A favorite good luck flower for the bride.

*orate*

To hold forth garrulously.

*Order* is heaven's first law.

Set thine house in *order*.

*be in order*

Said of tobacco when it is moist and flexible enough for tying, the damp earth of the dugout providing moisture.

*to keep order*

To behave or cause others to behave, to act circumspectly.



*ordering pit*

A sort of dugout sunk into the ground where tobacco hung on sticks can be put in order after it is cured, that is, soft enough for tying.

*ornery*

Mean, cantankerous.

*orphelin*

Orphan.

*orter*

Ought to.

*Orton*

A famous plantation built by King Roger Moore below Wilmington and still a showplace with its azalea gardens.

*Osage orange*

A tough small tree used in some places for fencing.

*Oswego tea*

See "bee balm."

*other world*

The hereafter.

*hadn't ought*

Ought not.

*ought to be bored for the hollow horn (for the simples)*

A feeble-minded person, an addlepat.

*ought to be playing with a string of spools and sent to catch bears with a switch*

A mouth-filling phrase applicable to a foolish person, a lightheaded one, an addlepat.

*Ouija board*

A small board on which people used to place their hands to get spiritual messages from the beyond, a sort of tribal fetish for a while.

An *ounce* o' mither-wit is worth a pound of clergy.

An *ounce* of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

*ourn*

Ours.

*out*

At the end of the row. We used to have a phrase that we used in the cotton

patch. "I'll beat you out," meaning I'll finish picking my row to the end before you will.

The final result, tally or reward. "He tried to preach but he made a poor out of it."

Finished, exhausted supply. "The meal is out and I've got to go to the mill."

Outside. "Your shirt tail is out."

*out at the elbows*

Poverty-stricken.

*outdacious*

Audacious, outrageous.

*outen*

Extinguish. "It took us two days to outen that forest fire."

*outface*

To win over the opposition, to outdo and outdare.

*outfox*

Outsmart.

*outhouse*

Privy.

*out in left field*

Out of line, silly, in poor judgment.

*out in the cold*

Defenseless, tricked, left behind.

*outlandish*

Foolish, wild-looking.

*outlaw*

A wild horse or run-mad dog.

*out like a light*

To faint suddenly.

*out-loud*

Aloud.

*out'n*

Out of.

*out'n flannel*

Outing flannel.

*Out of debt*, out of danger.

*out of gas*

Out of breath, exhausted.

*out of heart*

Disheartened, discouraged.

*out of line*

Non-conforming.

*out of order*

Not working properly.

as *out of place* as a flower in the hair of a corpse

*Out of reach* is out of harm.

*Out of sight*, out of mind.

*out of soap*

Depleted supplies, power, out of grease.

*out of sorts*

Irritable.

*out of the cards*

Not needed, not required.

*out of the frying pan into the fire*

In escaping from one trouble to land in a worse one.

*out of the woods*

Free of ill-health or financial difficulty.

*out of this world*

Beyond compare, rarest of the rare.

*out of whack*

Broken, out of order, out of line.

*outside looking in*

Beggarly, in a forlorn condition.

*outside of*

With the exception of, except for, and so on. "Outside of getting stuck in the ditch three or four times, we got along all right."

*outsider*

A bastard, a woods colt.

*outsides*

The bark strips of a log which were sawed off in the old days to get to the clean lumber — before mechanical peelers were invented. These outsides were used to fire the mill boiler and often given away to anyone who would take them.

*oven*

The womb, also a woman's pudendum.

*over*

More than. "I've been here over two hours."

Finished, ended. "The jonquils are about over for this year."

*wooden overcoat*

A coffin. "A wooden overcoat has no pockets."

*over fool's hill*

Grown-up, the age of common sense. "Thank goodness, my boy's finally got over fool's hill."

*overhalls*

A common pronunciation of overalls.

*overly*

Too much, too large.

*overrun*

Run over, spill over, or be over-full.

*over the hill*

Old age, on the way out. Also AWOL and an escapee from a chaingang or prison.

*over the hill to the poorhouse*

"With her spending, my old woman will send me over the hill to the poorhouse."

*over the hump*

Safe, past the crisis.

*over the top*

To reach a goal as in a bond or charity drive. Also to go over the top of one's trenches to attack the enemy in war.

*Owe* no man anything.

An *owl* hooting at one's window is a sign of death or misfortune.

*owl head*

A type of pistol.

He came unto his *OWN* and his own received him not.

*own man*

Individualism, free and self-responsible. "Jefferson believed in a man being his own man and believing like a man and acting like a man, too."

*to own the world and have the moon for a 'tater patch*

To be rich, sitting in clover.

*own up*

To confess, admit to the truth.

*ox*

A dull fellow, an impotent man, a eunuch.

*oxbow*

The curved bow which is used to encircle the ox's neck and go up through a yoke and fasten with a pin. The ox, against the yoke, would pull the vehicle and the bow would keep the yoke from sliding up over his shoulders.

*oxeye daisy*

A popular flower in the housewife's garden. There is a belief that a bed of oxeye daisies planted near the front door will drive away fleas, ticks and other pestiferous insects.

*Oysters* are said to be good for eating only in the months in which there is an "r" in the name.

# P

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*packed* like sardines

Crowded in a limited space.

*pack off on*

To put the blame unjustly on someone else. "He tried to pack off that automobile stealing on me."

*paddle*

To chastise on the buttocks, to spank. "I paddle my young'uns now and then to build up their character."

*paddle-footed*

Said of a horse that wings his front feet out as he trots or gallops.

*paddle one's own canoe*

To mind one's own business, to be self-reliant.

*H.F. Page*

A Cape Fear Valley poet who was my old teacher at Buie's Creek Academy and a very good one. He was caught like myself in the spell of John Charles McNeill and most of his poetry didn't quite make the grade. Like McNeill he published two volumes — *Songs of the Cape Fear* and *More Songs of the Cape Fear*.

*Walter Hines Page*

One of the best-known men ever to come out of the Valley. He early began to find fault with the lethargy of the South and wrote numerous articles attacking its peckerwood civilization. He later became editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and, under Woodrow Wilson, Ambassador to England. He lies buried near his home place in Old Bethesda churchyard, there in the sandhills.

*pain in the ass*

An irritating person or thing, a difficult and unpalatable duty.

*No pains*, no gains.

*Paint* the lily and gild the rose.

*paint the town red*

To go on a spree, to cut up, raise a ruckus.

*pair off*

To marry or become engaged.

*pair of minutes*

Immediately, soon.

*pair of stairs*

A stairway (steps). "In this old McNeill house there used to be the finest pair of stairs I ever saw."

*pale* as a ghost

*pale* as chalk

*pale* as death

*pale* as flour

*"The Pale White Rose"*

A favorite song sung by many a lovelorn youth or maid in the Valley. This beautiful late 19th century love-lament has haunted me ever since I first heard it sung. The lyric by an unknown author is sentimental but true and heart-tugging and, though lacking in the perfection of Ben Johnson's "Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes" and Mozart's immortal setting, it is real enough. The melody is by one R. W. Adams. After long searching I found a version in *The Franklin Square Song Collection*, published by Harper and Brothers, 1888.

"Oh hope, delusive dream of bliss,  
Where are thy visions now?  
Canst thou befriend an hour like this  
Or soothe my aching brow?  
Thine emblem is this lovely flower.  
Thy charms alike disclose.  
Thou'rt but the creature of an hour  
And like this pale white rose,  
Thou'rt but the creature of an hour  
And like this pale white rose."

*pallet*

A spread-down bed on the floor. We children used to on the hot summer nights always spread a quilt or two down on the floor and sleep where it would be cooler than in the hot feather bed.

*palmistry*

The telling of one's fortune through analysis of the shape and lines of a person's hand. This quackery is very popular in the Valley and as one drives along, either a small house or in most places a trailer will be set close to the highway with a sign of an uplifted hand and usually a billboard reading, "Madam so-and-so, Palmistry. Know the future from the present," and so on.

*palm-reading*

Palmistry.

*"Palms of Victory"*

Another old-time hymn of comfort. Mrs. Atlee Neville, who worked for and with my family for some forty years, told me sometime ago that it used to be one of her mother's favorites. She sang it for me — as much as she could. "Most of it's long gone from me, Mr. Green," she said.

"I saw a wayworn trav'ler  
In ragged garments clad,  
He struggled up the mountains,  
It seemed that he was sad.  
But he shouted as he journeyed,  
'Deliverance will come!  
Palms of victory, crown of glory,  
Palms of victory I shall wear.' "

*pan*

Face. "He faced the judge with the most innocent pan you ever saw."

*pancake*

Cow dung.

*pan fish*

Fish that are the right size for frying in a pan, medium-sized.

*push the panic button*

To grow hysterical, to fly off the handle and behave irrationally.

*pansy*

To my mind one of the most beautiful garden flowers in the world. My wife grows them profusely, and I never get tired of looking at their beautiful blooming.



*pansy party*

A gathering of homosexuals.

*caught with one's pants down*

To be discovered in an embarrassing situation, to be called on to act when one is unprepared.

*panty raids*

Prankish actions of some of the university and college students in surrounding girls' dormitories and demanding their panties. There hasn't been any panty raid at Chapel Hill or Raleigh or any of the colleges now for quite some time. No doubt the reason is the appearance of the high-raised and bobtailed miniskirts or abbreviated britches which make the panties no longer an unseen and desirable mystery.

*panty-waist*

A prissy, girlish fellow, a homosexual.

*pap*

Cheap talk, twaddle.

*Papa* loved whiskey,  
 Momma loved men.  
 Momma's in the graveyard,  
 Papa's in the pen.  
 (A moralistic rhyme.)

*old papa*

An elderly lecher.

*paper heart*

There is belief that if one would cure a witch spell or voodoo spell which has been suffered, he should cut out a paper heart, nail it to a tree and hit it with a hammer for nine mornings running, and on the ninth morning the person who had done the witching or cast the spell would die.

*"I Give You a Paper of Pins"*

A very popular children's song which is no doubt very old. The first stanza runs as follows:

"I give to you a paper of pins  
 And that's the way my love begins  
 If you will marry me, me, me,  
 If you will marry me."

The reply is:

"I don't accept your paper of pins

If that's the way your love begins,  
For I won't marry you, you, you,  
For I won't marry you."

And the song goes on with the offer of an easy chair in which the girl may sit and comb her golden hair, a silver spoon, a dress of green, then the key to the speaker's heart. But all of these are refused. Finally the offer is the key to the chest where the money is kept, and then the offer is accepted. Ironically his reply is:

"Ha, ha, ha, money is all  
And I won't marry you at all.  
For I won't marry you, you, you, .  
For I won't marry you."

*parable*

A story that carries a hidden truth or a moral admonition.

*paradiddle*

Foolish, much the same as fumadiddle.

*parapsychology*

The folk belief in certain academic and pseudo-scientific circles that knowledge of the external world can come through mystical and non-physical means. It is the old telepathy theory back again with a new dog tag.

*par for the course*

Average.

*paring iron*

An iron for paring horse and mule hooves.

*parlor*

The best room in the house. Usually kept for company entertaining, it was without a bed if the family could afford it. Here the piano or organ was kept and here courting was done — and that most discreetly.

*parlor house*

Bawdy house.

*to parrot*

To imitate.

We know in *part* and we prophesy in *part*.

*particular hell*

Extra loud behavior. "He raised particular hell at the party, and we had to take him out."

*partridgeberry*

A shy little green ground creeper which grows in the moist deep woods. It has delicate fragrant flowers which develop into single red berries that look like little drops of coral among the greenery. The deer especially like these berries and sometimes it is called deer-berry. Also it is known as love-in-winter, pipsissewa, wintergreen, etc. The berries are good for all kinds of diseases, especially for diarrhea and rheumatism, so say the herb doctors.

*parts*

The neighborhood, region. "I hear John Turlington caught a 'possum weighed 22 pounds — the biggest ever heard of in these parts."

*party politics*

A tough game in which the party is set ahead of any principle by office seekers. In our neighborhood my folks were all Democrats. I remember how we used to look down on a neighbor, Frank Harmon, because he was a Republican.

*pasnip*

Parsnip.

*make a pass at*

An act of flirtation. Also a pretense of working or doing. "He made a pass at pulling fodder, nothing more."

Heaven and earth shall *pass away*.

*passed out*

Drunken insensibility, or fainting spell which women in the earlier days seemed to succumb to, whether from their clothing, overwork, pregnancy or whatever.

*passel*

A great many, a horde, a large crowd. "I hear tell that Mr. Ed Deal has nineteen children — a whole passel of them — and when he goes to town to get sugar, he buys a five-pound sack, brings it home, lines them up at the table and, since they all drink coffee, he rips a hole in the bag and walks around, dumping some in each cup. When he gets to his own cup, the last, he shakes the bag and throws it out through the open door into the yard."

*pass in one's checks*

Same as to cash in one's checks—to die.

*pass in one's chips*

Also to die.

*passionflower*

The lowly maypop. The purple bloom of this flower is one of the most beautiful imaginable, and it has taken on a certain sort of symbolism in which the center of the big purple bloom represents the Trinity surrounded by the Twelve Apostles. The fruit in the late summer is very sweet and tastes much like the ripened pawpaw. We boys used to have great fun playing maypop war. See “maypop” and “maypop war.”

*pass like ships in the night*

Fail to cross paths.

*pass the buck*

To put the blame and the responsibility on another person to evade one's duty.

*pass the time of day*

To meet for a short visit and talk.

*pass water*

To urinate.

*pasteboard*

A ticket, say, to a football game. Also a playing card. “Deal them pasteboards, boy.”

*pasting*

A whipping or drubbing, a bad defeat.

He maketh me to lie down in green *pastures*, he leadeth me beside the still waters.

*Pat and Mike*

The two proverbial Irish funny men. Most of the jokes in the Valley having something to do with the Irish paired these two off.

*patch*

A cultivated area, even a large one. “Soon as this meetin's over I got to get out in my corn patch.”

*patch up*

To heal, to become friends after a quarrel.

*patent medicine*

Liquids, pills, compounds and curative materials offered for sale to the public under a patented trademark and without a doctor's prescription.

Among the popular patent medicines for which we Valley people have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars and continue to spend are — Adlerika for gas, Angostura Bitters for nerves, Anti-Karnnia for headaches, Astyptodine, Ayers' Cherry Pectoral for coughs, etc., Ayers' Compound

Extract of Sarsaparilla, Ayers' Ague Cure, Ayers' Hair Vigor, Ayers' Sarsaparilla for the King's Evil (Scrofula), B.C. for headaches, Barnes and Park's Dental Snuff for the gums and teeth, Beckwith's Anti-Dyspeptic Pills, Dr. Benson's Skin Cure, "The Blood Food" for consumption, Bisodol for acid stomach, Dr. Blosser's Catarrh Cigarettes, Blue Mass for nits and lice, Bromo-Quinine, Bronkaid tablets for sticky phlegm, Brownatone for gray hair, Brown's Iron Bitters, Buffalo Springs Water,

Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin, California Fig Syrup, Calomel, Candy Cathartic Cascarets to cure constipation, Capudine for headache, Carter's Little Liver Pills, Chalybeate Springs water, Cheney's Expectorant for coughs, Cherokee Remedy for gonorrhea and all diseases of the urinary organs,

Chichester Pills for Ladies, Rev. Child's Catarrh Cure, Dr. Christie's Galvanic Belt and Magnetic Fluid (bracelets, necklaces), Cleveland Springs Water, Coffey-Humber Cancer Cure, Collum Dropsy Remedy, Cook County Blood Poison Remedy, Costar's Vermin Exterminator, Crazy Water Crystals, Dr. Crain's Abdominal Supporter, Creomulsion for colds, Danderine for falling hair, Davis' Vegetable Pain Killer, Digel for stomach acid, Dixie Lax-u-ton Liver Tonic, Doan's Pills for backache, Dodson's Livertone, Dr. Dull's Cough Syrup, Dr. Dye's Electro-Voltaic Belt for debility, Earles Hypo-cod, Dr. Eaton's Blood Food, Dr. Eaton's Infantile Cordial, Electro-Medicated pads for general diseases, aches and pains, Entoral,

Ferro-Phosphorated Elixir of Calisaya — a good tonic, Fitch's Dandruff Remover, Fixodent Elastic Membrane for false teeth tightening, Fletcher's Castoria (children cry for it), Foley's Honey and Tar for La Grippe, Foley's Kidney Cure for Bright's Disease, Forhan's Toothpaste for Pyorrhea, Fowle's Peruvian Syrup and Iron Tonic, Fresh Congress Water, Fuquay Springs water, Fruit-a-tives, Gardiner's Rheumatic and Neuralgia Compound, Geritol, Golden Nugget Laxative Goose Grease, Graefenberg Vegetable Pills, Gray's Invaluable Ointment, Groves Tasteless Chill Tonic,

Haarlem Oil Capsules for aches and pains, Dr. Hand's Teething Lotion, Harris Springs water, Dr. Harter's Iron Tonic Blood Purifier, Hasting's Compound Syrup of Naphtha, Dr. Hathaway's Stricture Cure, Heimstreet's Inimitable Hair Restorer, Herb Juice for Constipation, Herpicide for dandruff, Hindipo Great French Remedy for restoring lost youth, Hood's Liver Pills, Hood's Sarsaparilla, Hostetter's Celebrated Stomach Bitters for general complaints and disabilities to which the feeble are so subject, Hutchin's Dyspepsia Bitters,

The Indian Panacea (Hiram Robinson, M.D., Agent), Infallible Pile

Remedy, Ironized Yeast, Iron Malt, Jackson's Springs Water, Jad Salts for kidneys, Japanese Pile Ointment, Johnson's Anodyne Liniment, Dr. Johnson's Indian Blood Syrup, Joint Ease Salve for aches, Jordan's Cold Tablets, Jurubeba for decay of vital forces, Kidney Wort, Kodd Dyspepsia cure, Kodol for sour stomach, Latoila for growing hair, Lemon Springs water, Listerine, McAlister's All-Healing Ointment, The Magic Comb (changes color of hair to color of comb, be sure to state color wanted), Magnolia Balm for bad skin, Dr. Martin's Catamenial Corrector for suffering women, Dr. Martin's Compound Syrup of Wild Cherry Measurin for colds, Mexican Mustang Liniment, Montague's Balm (Indian remedy for toothache), Morehead's Magnetic Plaster for rheumatism, lameness, etc., Dr. Moses' (of Virginia) Cancer Cure, Dr. Moses' (of Virginia) Stammering Cure, Mother's Friend, Mother's Joy, Mount Vernon Springs water, Musterol for lumbago, Nature's Oil Liniment, Nature's Remedy for Dyspepsia, Number Nine, Oil of Salt for ladies' pimples,

Pape's Diapepsin, Parker's Ginger Tonic, Parker's Hair Balsam, Parson's Purgative Pills, Paw Paw Tonic, Mrs. Joe Person's Remedy, Pertussin Cough Cure, Peruna, Peter's Vegetable Pills, Peterson's Ointment for eczema, Dr. O. Phelps Brown's Permanent Cure for consumption, bronchitis, asthma, coughs, colds, general debility,

Phillips' Milk of Magnesia, Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, Pinex for coughs, Mrs. Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, Pond's Extract, Polk's Diphtheria Cure, Pomeroy's Elastic Truss, Dr. Porter's Antiseptic Healing Oil, Psychomancy or Soul Charming, Quercus' Cod Liver Oil Jelly, Resinol for itching and burning, Rheumacide, Rheumaid, Ripan's tablets for the liver, Rowan's Tonic Mixture, Rydale's Tonic, S.S.S. Blood Remedy, St. Jacob's Oil for Rheumatism, St. Joseph's G.F.P. for women, Salicylica for rheumatism, Samaritan Nervine, Sand's Sarsaparilla, Sanford's Liver Invigorater and Compound Cathartic Pills, Saratoga Waters, Scott's Emulsion, Dr. Sharp's Dyspepsia Cure, Shiloh's Catarrh Remedy, Simmons' Liver Regulator, 666 Chill and Fever Tonic, Sominex for insomnia, Sloan's Liniment, Spalding's Cephalic Pills for headache, Stanback Headache Powders, Dr. Stinson's Asthma Remedy, Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets, Swamp Root, Dr. Swayne's Compound Syrup of Wild Cherry, Syrup of Figs,

Tanlac for indigestion, Tarrant's Effervescent Seltzer Aperient, Taylor's Blood Medicine, Teethina for better babies, Terry's Infallible Destroyer, Thedford's Black Draught, Tiz for aching feet, Trippe's Sarsaparilla (cure for scrofula and syphilis), Dr. Turner's Pills for the cure of ague and fever and chill and fever,

Tutt's Hair Dye, Tutt's Pills for Torpid Liver, Dr. Tutt's Vegetable Liver

Pills, Vick's Vaporub, Vinolt, Wells' Carbolic Tablets for all throat diseases, Wendell's Pills, Wild's Iceland Moss and Flaxseed Candy (world-renowned for the cure of the blue cough and colds), Dr. Wilson's Family Pills, Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup, Wright's Indian Vegetable Pills, Wythe's Sage and Sulphur Compound for the hair, Yeager's Liniment, Zemo for pimples and itchy eczema.

These are only a few. There are hundreds of others.

*paternoster pea*

When its leaves incline downward, cloudy weather is coming; if upward, fair weather.

*pater-roll*

Patrol, the home guard during the Civil War. The Negroes called the patrol the pater-roller or patty rollers, and there was a common saying that went about, "You better be in your house by dark or the patty-rollers will get you."

as *patient* as death

as *patient* as Job

*partridge*

Partridge. In Harnett County when I was a boy nearly all the old people used this pronunciation, with a short *a*.

*patsy*

An effeminate male.

*patter*

Idle and foolish chatter.

*Patty-cake*, patty-cake,

Baker's man.

Roll him, roll him,

Stick him in the pan.

(A baby tickling rhyme.)

(On the word "stick" the baby or child would usually be given a tickling finger punch in the tummy.)

We had another version of this:

"Patty-cake, patty-cake

Baker's man.

Roll him, roll him,

Throw him in the pan.

Roll him up and cross him with a T.

Throw him in the oven for baby and me."

And still another version:

“Patty-cake, patty-cake, baker’s man,  
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.  
Pat it and pick it and mark it with B  
And put it in the oven for baby and me.”

*patty-roller*

Patrollers. See “pater-roll.”

*“Paul and Silas”*

An old song we used to sing while working in the fields.

“Paul and Silas  
Bound in jail.  
One sang all night  
While the other one prayed.  
Do, Lord, deliver me.

“Never seen the like  
Since I been born,  
The people keep a-coming  
And the train done gone.  
Do, Lord, deliver me.

“Ain’t but one train  
On this track,  
Straight up to heaven  
And then straight back.  
Do, Lord, deliver me.”

*Paul pry*

An eavesdropper, a peeping tom, a meddler.

*paume*

Palm.

*paunch guts*

A person with a large stomach.

*pauper’s oath*

An oath of destitution through which legal counsel may be secured by defendant in court. This counsel is appointed by the judge and often consists of talent that is unemployed or otherwise and therefore second-rate. Thus it happens that often a poor defendant who is also something of a taxpayer and is helping to support the solicitor who is trying to send him, say, to the electric chair, is dependent upon a second-rate legal counsel to save his life



or to temper his sentence. This is being limited in North Carolina. I remember some years ago when I was traveling in Russia that some of the young smart alec Komsomol people, that is, members of the Lenin Youth Party, pointed out this injustice to me saying that in many ways our courts with their trial by jury were inferior in justice to theirs. I had never thought of this particular item in this way, and I am glad to find that we are remedying this lack though of course the Russian criticism had nothing to do with it, but a democratic sense of long delayed justice.

*paw*

To fondle amorously and roughly. "Coming from Greenville with that old man I got myself pawed near 'bout to death and necked down to a nub," said the pretty girl at the party the other night.

*pawpaw*

A charming little shrub which has now pretty much disappeared from the Valley. It just happens that I am lucky in having one growing wild at my back door. It was there when I moved out in the country and is still flourishing. Sometimes it is called "the custard apple." Some people are allergic to the fruit and after eating it have been known to break out in a rash. Why the little plant is disappearing I don't know.

It is hard to *pay* for bread that is already eaten.

*pay an arm and a leg*

Meet an exceedingly high price.

*pay-dirt*

Success.

*pay mind to*

To notice, to give attention to.

*pay on the barrel head*

Pay cash on delivery or pay up honestly and squarely and out in the open.

*pay sign to*

Give attention to.

He who *pays* the piper calls the tune.

*pay the fiddler*

To suffer the consequences, to pay one's way as one goes, to pay for the value received. Also same as "The laborer is worthy of his hire."

*pay through the nose*

To pay an overcharge or, with difficulty, an outlandish price.

*PDQ*

Pretty damn quick. "You better send some money PDQ."

*pea*

A sliding weight used on the old timey steelyards, or "still-yards," as we pronounced it in the Valley.

*Peace* hath her victories no less renowned than war.

the *peace* of God that passeth all understanding

Let him speak now or else forever hold his *peace*.

In time of *peace* prepare for war.

Live in *peace* with all men.

*peach*

The common fruit in the Valley and especially in the sandhills where the fruit is grown commercially. A tincture of the leaves mixed with tobacco juice used to make a flavoring for children's medicine, and the mixture was even better if mixed with snuff. Mother used to put peach leaves in her jelly jars to add to the flavor. Also the leaves were used in the old days for tanning leather as well as for making poultices. Sometimes these leaves were warmed and worn as a bandage for headache and other pains.

Also an attractive girl, a honey.

*Peach and Honey*

A brand of chewing tobacco.

*peacherino*

A stunning girl, intensification of peach.

*Peaches* in the summertime,

Pumpkins in the fall.

Christmas comes but once a year

And my gal (wife) wants a shawl.

(A recitation rhyme.)

*peach kernels*

Pounded and made into a sort of oil, these were good for earache. Also a drop of the oil, made by burning a branch of the peach tree with a pine knot or lightwood splinter, on a sore tooth gave help. A dose of this was also good for worms in children.

*peacock*

A show-off, a dandy.

The call of the *peacock* means rain.

*pea hull saddles*

The long hulls of peas worked into a pattern to represent a saddle. My cousin Laura Green was especially clever at making these saddles.

*peaked*

Sick looking, thin, anemic.

*peanuts*

Unimportant matters, trifling things or sums, cheap stuff.

Don't cast your *pearls* before swine.

*"Pearl of the Fountain"*

A popular lyric or something of a ballad which Scotch settlers in the Valley brought over from the old country.

"The pearl of the fountain, the rose of the valley,  
Are sparkling and lovely, are stainless and mild;  
The pearl sheds its ray 'neath the dark water gaily,  
The rose opes its blossoms to bloom on the wild.

"The pearl and the rose are the emblems of Mary,  
The maid of Glenconnel, once lovely and gay;  
A false lover woo'd her, ye damsels be wary,  
Now scath'd is the blossom, now dimm'd is the ray.

"You have seen her when morn brightly dawn'd on the mountain,  
Trip blythely along, singing sweet to the gale;  
At noon with her lambs, by the side of yon fountain;  
Or wending, at eve, to her home in the vale.

"With the flowers of the willow-tree blent are her tresses,  
Now woe-worn and pale, in the glen she is seen  
Bewailing the cause of her rueful distresses—  
How fondly he vow'd — and how false he has been."

*pearly everlasting*

See "rabbit tobacco."

*pearly gates*

The entrance to the heavenly home in the hereafter. According to Revelation 21:21, there are twelve gates which are twelve great pearls. "Every several gate was of one pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."

*Peas Porridge Hot*

A hand-clapping or rope-jumping rhyme.

“Peas porridge hot,  
Peas porridge cold,  
Peas porridge in the pot  
Nine days old.”

Sometimes we children called it “Peas pudding hot.”

“Peas pudding hot,  
Peas pudding cold,  
Peas pudding in the pot  
Nine days old.  
Some like it hot,  
Some like it cold,  
Some like it in the pot  
Nine days old.”

*the last of pea time and the first of squash*

A barren spell, an empty period of time.

*pea turkey*

A lack of notice or attention. “I gave him a five-dollar bill as a contribution, and he never said pea turkey.” Much the same as boo turkey.

*A pebble* carried in the mouth will ease thirst.

*not the only pebble on the beach*

Not the only desirable or important person available or present.

*pecans*

A flourishing fruit tree in the Valley. The pecan trees are becoming more and more numerous and before long I expect that the exporting of pecans will become a real agricultural item.

*pecker*

Penis.

*keep one's pecker up*

To keep one's spirits up, to remain optimistic.

*peckerwood*

A woodpecker. Also a term applied to a poor white Southern tenant farmer. I got well acquainted with this word when I wrote my first picture in Hollywood entitled “Cabin in the Cotton.” This was the dramatization of a novel of that name by Henry Harrison Kroll. I remember I had something to do with choosing the cast in this picture. During the tryouts a young

freckle-faced attractive blond girl showed up and she obviously had great talent. I suggested to Mike Curtiz we should cast this girl in the part of the landlord's daughter, and so we did. She sort of ran away with the picture. Her name was Bette Davis.

*peckish*

Irritable, fiery.

*peculiar*

Retarded. "Ez Bradley's youngest boy is peculiar."

*pedab*

A small clay marble in the game of marbles, usually same as a dinah.

*pee*

To urinate.

*peelings*

Shavings.

*peel one's eye*

To keep a sharp lookout.

*pee pee*

A baby term for urination. Piss.

*peepies*

Tiny baby chickens.

*peeve*

To irritate.

*pee-wee*

Any small person or bird, also a small marble.

*peg*

Penis.

*peg away*

To work doggedly, steadily, at a task.

*pegged out*

Exhausted, tired out.

*peg leg*

A one-legged person, one with a wooden leg.

*peg out*

To fail, to die.

*pelican flower*

See "Virginia snakeroot."

The *pen* is mightier than the sword.

*pen-fattened*

It was the custom among the Valley farmers to pen up their "fattening hogs" in the fall and feed them heavily on corn and slops and bran and get them fat before the slaughtering, when the cold weather came on.

Take care of the *pennies* and the dollars will take care of themselves.

*penny* for your thoughts

*Penny* makes trouble a dollar can't cure.

A *penny* saved is a *penny* earned.

*penny*-wise and pound-foolish

to turn up like a bad *penny*

The bad *penny* always comes back (or comes round).

in for a *penny*, in for a pound

A bad *penny* is hard to get rid of.

If you find a *penny* with its head up, it is a sign of good luck.

*penny dreadful*

A cheap, sentimental novel or hair-raising story.

*pennyroyal (penny ock, pennr'ile)*

A common aromatic little plant which we children often used to keep away chiggers and fleas. We would smear or crush the tiny leaves in our hands and rub our bare legs and feet. Also pennyroyal tea was used as a sure cure for making the measles break out. According to my old friend Mr. Mac, many of the pregnant women in the Valley used the pennyroyal tea as a good preventative against morning nausea. I remember that my own mother often put some of the plants in the room on the floor and in the corners to keep out ticks and fleas.

*pennywinkle*

Periwinkle.

*pen pusher*

A clerk.

*Pentecostal Holiness*

An especially fervent religious sect that seems to be growing even more

numerous in the Valley, now that all sorts of scientific and technological gadgets and diagnoses and cures are coming on. This sect claims to have taken its inspiration from Acts 2 which says: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

I have had a lot of experience with the Pentecostal Holiness. I used to go to Falcon every August where these people would gather for their camp meeting, and what orgies I have witnessed there! I can still see my Uncle Albert and Uncle Alfred sitting up behind the pulpit with their palm-leaf fans going and their faces wreathed in seraphic smiles as the people down below stumbled and shouted, jumped up and down, and cut up most shamefully. I've seen young men and women fall in trances and then be carried out and laid on the sawdust floor in a sort of stable-like building and left lying there until they came back to their senses. Even as a young boy I found this scandalous and, in remembrance, even more scandalous. And still more scandalous is the fact that this sort of emotional debauchery continues to this day. As I say, it seems to be increasing, especially now that these people can do their stuff by way of the radio and TV.

*People* don't change and nothing don't change them, but they change things.

*People* who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

You can fool some of the *people* all of the time, and all of the *people* some of the time, but you can't fool all of the *people* all of the time.

*pepper*

High spirits.

Paper. "Bring me two rolls of toilet pepper from the store."

To hit a target with small shot, to direct rapid-fire questions.

*pepper and salt*

Speckled.

*peppergrass*

A native annual in the Valley, it can be seen widely spread in the fields and along the roadsides from May to November. Our bare ankles used to get a tingle as we would tramp through this in the summertime.

*hot pepper*

The swift pace in the game of jumping the rope.

*peppermint*

A widely spreading plant in the Valley, highly aromatic, sometimes also called spearmint. Many a young man has chewed it as he was on his way to see his sweetheart, thus making his breath sweet, and for a purpose.

*pep up*

To enliven.

*perc*

Percolate.

*perch*

A high place. "The votes came in and he was knocked off his perch."

*off one's perch*

To be addled, to be non compos mentis.

*perfectly good*

Undoubtedly good, of prime value. "The first lick he hit he ruined my perfectly good axe."

*perform*

To have an orgasm. "They say Jean Jacques Rousseau couldn't perform and that was the one reason he wrote so much about men and women and their education."

*perish*

To be thirsty, to hunger after. "I'm perished for water."

*persimmon* (usually pronounced 'simmon)

A popular wild fruit in the Valley. One of our best drinks used to be 'simmon beer, a good tonic for both children and grown-ups. I remember when I was a boy we used to make up a big keg or small barrel of it at our house. We'd mash up, say, a bushel of ripe persimmons after the first frost had struck them, mix that well with one-half bushel of wheat bran, and sometimes we would mash up sweet potatoes. Then we'd add some twelve gallons of fresh spring water and three or four ounces of hops. Next we'd take a clean barrel, cover the bottom with broom straw up to a few inches above the spigot level and lay a few dozen ripe honey locusts on the straw. Then we would pour the new mixture into the barrel and let it stand three or four weeks in a warm place. If we wanted to, we'd draw the beer off, put it in jugs or bottles and store it in a cool place. From then on we were supposed to have a fine beverage for our table and for our friends on any occasion. Man never could drink enough to get drunk on it, and now that legitimate beer has come in, making of persimmon beer has just about passed out.



*persimmon bark*

A liquid concoction from the inner bark of the persimmon tree is supposed to be one of the best gargles for ulcerated or sore throats. According to Uncle Beverly Lassiter, he has stopped many a coming bad cold by use of this gargle.

*persuader*

Any kind of whip, firearms, club, blackjack, policeman's billy and so on. "He started fighting at me and said he wouldn't go, and then I laid my persuader alongside of his noggin and he ca'med right down."

*Persuasion* is better than force.

*pert* as a cricket*Peruvian daisy*

A common garden weed pest that appears in late summer. It turns into a mush at the first frost.

*perzactly*

Exactly.

*pestle-gut*

A mule.

*pestle-tail*

An old worn-out horse or mule.

*pet*

Anger, high temper. "She got into a pet and bawled him out."

*petch*

Pitch. "That Gordon Overby petched a' almost perfect game and struck out twenty-one of the Black River Cats."

*pete man*

A safe cracker.

Don't rob *Peter* to pay Paul.

*peter*

The penis.

*peter out*

To cease gradually, to give up on the job, fade out, weaken.

*Peter, Peter*, pumpkin eater,  
Had a wife and couldn't keep her,  
Put her in a pumpkin shell.  
There he kept her very well.  
(A recitation line.)

*Peter Piper* picked a peck of pickled peppers.  
A peck of pickled peppers *Peter Piper* picked.  
If *Peter Piper* picked a peck of pickled peppers,  
Where is the peck of pickled peppers *Peter Piper* picked?  
(A tongue twister.)

*peth*

Pith.

*pet snake*

I've seen a few pet snakes in my time, harmless things — little grass snakes or black snakes which some of the school boys would keep for a while and then let go. And I've heard different stories of people who have had pet snakes, but other than the two mentioned above I've never seen them.

But one day old Uncle Bayliss Purefoy and I were sitting on the bank of Morgan's Creek, fishing. The fish weren't biting and Uncle Bayliss got to reminiscing a bit.

"Yessuh," he said, "I been fishing up and down these banks and traipsing in these woods for more than sixty years."

"And I'll bet you've seen a lot of things, haven't you, Uncle Bayliss!" I was hoping he'd tell me a story as he had in times past.

"A-plenty of things — varmints and snakes — and one snake I mean especially. Yessuh. Well, that snake still uses in these woods. Now and then I can see the place where he's been dragging along in the sand. It's April time now and warm weather come and it's time for him to be on the move again. You know where he goes every April?"

"No, I don't, Uncle Bayliss."

"He goes 'way over there beyond Carrboro to visit a friend of his'n."

"What sort of friend?"

"A dead man." And Uncle Bayliss chuckled, then took out a piece of Apple tobacco with trembling bony hands and worked off a bit and put it into his toothless mouth.

"Way back yonder you might know," he said, "there was a man named Taylor lived there beyond Carrboro. He had some slaves too, they tell, and he was a mighty working man and he made everybody else work around him. Well, when he come down to die, he left it agreed upon that he'd be buried standing up. Yessuh — standing up. And that's the way they done him — buried him standing up in his grave on his two feet. Course they had to dig the grave much deeper. Most like a well it was." And the old man chuckled again.

"Why did they want to bury him standing up?" I queried.

"So as he could watch his slaves working, they said." And he whickered and bent joyously about him from side to side. Then he went on. "Well,

they do tell that not long after he was buried, when the spring come on, one day some folks come along there and they seen a thing about the size of a big hamper basket all quiled up on the ground, and it was that snake. A big bull snake he was. The biggest ever seen in this country — about as thick as your thigh. Well, the folks got 'em a pitchfork and a fence-rail and they made at this snake. But he squiggled away in the bushes and was gone. And then it came to be that every spring they'd find that snake hanging around that grave."

"Well, how do you know he used to live in these woods if they found him over there at Carrboro which is two or three miles away?"

" 'Cause," said Uncle Bayliss, "I once come 'pon him lying side a log down the creek there." And he gestured off. "Yessuh, he was big as a whole hamper basket quiled round and round. And his head was big as a saucer and black and flat and his eye was bright. Blue black bright like a ripe pokeberry before the frost has struck it. I got me a brush pole to make at him, but he slid off through the pizen ivy and wild strawberry vines, and he made a scratch filing sound agin the dead leaves as he went. There was a good patch of sand close by the creek bank and he made a track through it like dragging a watermelon or something. And plenty of times after that I could see where he'd drug in the sand on his way over beyond Carrboro to visit that grave where old Taylor was buried in the ground standing up. Yessuh, there was some kind of friendship betwixt 'em. What it was, I don't know, but animals and snakes have plenty of quare things go on in their heads, and you and me will never know what it is. So the dead man that few folks liked when he was alive had a snake that liked him, a pet snake, when dead."

His whicker of laughter was cut off suddenly as he made a dive for his fishing pole, for the cork had gone quick and jooked under, and the end of his pole was jerking up and down in the water. With a shout of triumph, he swished a big yellow-bellied catfish out and onto the bank. "I never knowed it to fail," he went on as he held his pole aloft and the line straight to keep it from getting tangled by the flopping fish. "Get to thinking about something, and then the fish will bite."

### *petticoat fever*

A male yearning for a female.

### *petting party*

A gathering of indiscriminate lovemaking young people.

### *phantom pregnancy*

A pathological condition into which some married women fall due to their desire to have children when they are unable to have them. A doctor friend of mine told me of a recent case of a young wife who actually swelled up

and had all the symptoms of pregnancy. After examination he told her she was not pregnant, and slowly the swelling of her stomach subsided.

*Pharaoh's wind*

An east wind that helps hold a drought over the land. Rain will come only when this evil wind changes to the south and southwest. My father used to say, "Uh-uh, that's Pharaoh's wind and no rain til it changes!" Why it is not called "Moses' wind," I don't know. See Exodus 10:13 "And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night, and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts."

*pharisee*

A hypocrite, one who adheres to the letter of the law and forgets the spirit.

*Philadelphia lawyer*

A specially smart person. "It takes a Philadelphia lawyer to figure out this income tax business."

*phleem*

Phlegm.

*phlegm-cutter*

An early morning drink of hard liquor, same as an eye-opener.

*physic*

To treat medically, to give medicine to. "I swole up terrible till that root doctor physicked me and then I got well right quick."

*Physician*, heal thyself.

The best *physicians* are Dr. Diet, Dr. Quiet, and Dr. Merryman.

*piano-legs*

Big heavy legs.

*picayune*

A small worthless coin, also meaning sorriness, worthlessness and so on. "That Jessie Marks ain't worth a picayune."

*picayunish*

Testy, querulous, a stickler for unimportant details.

*piccolo house*

A dance hall equipped with a juke box. Also a Negro bawdy house.

*pick a bone*

To quarrel.

*pickaninny*

An old Southern term for a little Negro child.

*pick at*

To pester, irritate, quarrel with.

*pickerelweed*

An attractive perennial that grows in watery places in the swamps, usually reaching from one to four feet in height with showy spikes of blue flowers. A tea made from the root is supposed to be a good cathartic. The plant is becoming very popular for garden pools. My wife and I planted several of them near a spring below the house.

*picking daisies*

Acting crazy.

*picking geese*

Plucking of the feathers from the goose's breast to make feather pillows or feathered beds. "March had come and it was time to be picking my geese." As a boy I used to earn a quarter now and then helping a neighbor catch her geese for plucking.

*picking sage*

To be out looking for a husband. "Oh, I was out Sunday picking sage."

*picking the ear*

A pantomime of insult or blackguarding when directed at a person, often resulting in a fight. A quarreling fellow would thrum a forefinger along the lobe of his ear while glaring at his opponent and calling out belligerently, "Black-gyard! Black-gyard!" Fisticuffs usually followed. Compare the opening of Romeo and Juliet where biting the thumb at a person was an insult. A Capulet man says in reference to the Montague, "I will bite my thumb at them, which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it." A fight follows.

*pickle*

An embarrassing situation, a predicament. Also an awkward or unpopular person, male or female.

*in a pickle*

In a bind, a difficult situation.

*pickled*

Drunk.

*pickle-weaned*

A sour-faced person. See "weaned on a pickle."

*a pick-me-up*

An early morning dram or invigorating drink of whiskey.

*pick one's nose at*

To make fun of, to jeer at. "He picked his nose at me and so I fou't him."

He who gambles *picks* his own pocket.

*pick up*

To convalesce, to get better. "After that last spell he seems to be picking up."

To gather one's baggage, to prepare to leave. "Just pick up and come down any old time."

*Picnic Twist*

A brand of chewing tobacco.

If a *picture* falls from the wall, bad luck is coming.

*in the picture*

Included, counted in.

*piddle*

To trifle around, to waste time, much the same as fiddle around. Also to urinate. "Every piddle makes a puddle."

*piddler*

A procrastinator, a trifler.

*pie*

Dung. "He scared the living pie out of me when he busted that hog bladder in my face."

*pie in the sky*

A false dream, welfare payments, easy pickings.

*humble pie*

Shame, disgrace. To eat humble pie is the same as to eat crow.

*piece*

Sexual intercourse. "The first time I was with that woman I got me a piece."

A section of land or acreage. "He's got a fine piece of cotton."

A distance. "He lives over there across the valley a piece."

To sew together, to join together. "Yesterday we pieced the quilt, and tomorrow we start quilting in earnest."

A contemptible woman or girl.

A recitation. "Go on, son, say your piece."

*piece of calico*

A girl.

*piece out*

To make a thing last or serve, to mend. "He pieced the thing out with a lot of strings."

*all to pieces (go to pieces)*

Completely undone, distraught. "When he heard the news, he went all to pieces."

*pie-ded*

Spotted, pied.

*pie-eyed*

Soused drunk.

*pifflicated*

Drunk.

*piffling*

Foolish, trifling.

*pig*

Unlucky score in the roley-hole ball-throwing game.

A game in which the first player chooses a letter and each successive player adds a letter to it, endeavoring not to have a word end with him, which makes him a "pig." Usually the player who gets three "pigs" is out.

A bun or cake—

"Tom, Tom, the piper's son,  
Stole a *pig* and away he run."

It means he stole a bun. The modern nursery rhyme books that show Tom running with an actual live pig under his arm are all wrong.

A greedy gut.

"This little *pig* went to market.  
This little pig stayed home.  
This little pig had roast beef.  
This little pig had none.  
This little pig cried, 'Wee, wee, wee'  
All the way home."

(A tickling rhyme with baby's five toes.)

*pigeonberries*

Same as pokeweed berries.

*pigeon-wing*

A capered step in a folk dance.

*piggin*

A small wooden vessel, usually holding half a peck or more.

Also an iron pot with two handled ears.

*piggyback*

A person being carried on the back of another, his legs under the bearer's arms and arms around his neck.

*pig in a parlor*

An awkward or obstreperous person.

*pig in a poke*

A blind trade or bargain. "Don't buy a pig in a poke."

*like a pig in shit*

Completely satisfied, happy.

*in a pig's ass (eye)*

A term of derogation, derision or denial.

*Pigs* can see the wind.

*pig sticker*

A butcher knife, sometimes called a frog sticker.

*pig's vest and buttons*

Sowbelly, bacon.

*pigweed*

Garden curse. There are several species of this plant which spread mat-like over the ground. It is easy to destroy if one gets at it early with his hoe.

*piker*

A cheap skate, a complainer, a belly-acher, an unreliable person.

*pile*

Great deal, much. "He has done a pile of work."

*pilewort*

The fireweed. This plant springs up plentifully in newground after it has been burnt over. Sometimes if left alone it will grow to a height of eight or ten feet and then spread its silky white blossoms to the air. It is easy to kill. The name derives from its use in treating piles (hemorrhoids).



*pilgrim's staff*

The penis.

*piling full*

Heaped full, overflowing. "I want you boys to tote in wood and fill the box piling full."

*a bitter pill to swallow*

To accept shame, disgrace, to eat one's words, same as to eat crow.

*pillar to post*

Harum-scarum. "You say you were born between pillar and post. Go ahead, Johnny, and tell us about it."

*pilled*

Peeled.

*pill pusher*

A pharmacist.

*pill roller*

The same as pill pusher. Also a term for a medical doctor.

In a calm sea every man is a *pilot*.

*pime blank*

Point blank.

See a *pin* and pick it up

All the day you'll have good luck.

See a *pin* and let it lie

All the day good luck will fly.

Find a *pin* and let it lie

You'll need the *pin* before you die.

See a *pin* and pick it up,

It will bring to you good luck.

*pin*

Pen. In the Valley old days the e became a short i in all such words— ten (tin), Ben (Bin), den (din), Len (Lin), etc.

*pinch*

A crisis, a precarious situation. "He let me have \$50 in a pinch and that got me started."

*pincher*

A lecherously inclined man, especially an oldish one. "There was one of them Civil War pinchers at the party, and I come away black and blue," said Essie McIntosh.

*pinchpenny*

A stingy person.

*pindling*

Spindling.

*pine*

A common lumber and pulpwood tree in North Carolina. There are many species of pine: longleaf pine, shortleaf, loblolly, rosemary and so on. In the old days Eastern North Carolina was a great stretch of longleaf pine forests, and when I was a boy, in driving from home down to Dunn, we would often pass turpentine stills here and there with the smoke rising from them like a fog. Not only was the pine once the source of tar pitch, turpentine and lumber — in these later days of pulpwood — but it was also the source of many folk cures. A cure, for instance, for influenza was to take several doses of warm water in which the inner skin of the pine bark had been soaked. Some old people would say the cure was no good unless the tree was skinned on the north side. Also thrash doctors would use the pinetops for some of their hocus-pocus cures, and I've known of cases where the quack doctors would put pine bows under the sick person's bed to help towards convalescence. Turpentine, tar oil, and tar salve were also used for every sort of ailment. It would take pages to describe the ways and uses of the pine trees. Books have already been written on the subject.

*pineapple weed*

A sweet smelling little shrub sometimes called May weed. The tea from this weed was used as a tonic.

*pine knot*

The resinous knot of the longleaf pine especially good for starting fires on the cold winter mornings. Same as lightwood knot.

*piner*

A person who carries a pine torch at night to assist in gigging or landing fish.

*pine rosin chewing gum*

We children often pinched off brown or yellow bits of hardened turpentine exuding from scarred spots on longleaf pine trees and used them for our gum. We did the same with sweet gum oozeings.

*pine straw*

The dead pine needles. In rainy weather we used to get the dreadful news from our father who would come out and announce, "Well, boys, while it is wet, we better rake pine straw." So into the woods we'd go and rake and rake and haul the straw to put into the mule stables and into the cow stables for bedding. And in the spring these stables would be cleaned out and the manure taken into the fields. Another use for pine straw was for hilling our potatoes. When the first frost came, we would go into the potato patch and cut away the vines and then with a turn-plough, plough up the potatoes and sort them out and then hill them. These hills usually contained some fifteen to twenty-five bushels piled cone-like, covered with pine straw and then covered with dirt with an opening at the top like an Indian's teepee. Sometimes we would put a shelter over these hills. We were always aghast when we opened these hills to see how many of our potatoes had rotted.

*pineweed*

A curse to many a Valley pasture. In the late summer the orange tops of these little tough weeds show yellow across the landscape. Cattle will not eat them and, unless they are kept mowed down, they will take over a farmer's pasture.

*Piney Bottom Massacre*

During the Revolutionary War the Valley Scotchmen and Englishmen were divided into Tories and Whigs, or Loyalists and Patriots. Much local clan fighting and killing took place up and down the land. One of the most brutal of these massacres occurred at Piney Bottom where a number of Tories murdered several of Colonel Wade's men and a little boy. See "Massacre of Piney Bottom."

*piney woods rooter*

A poor kind of hog, one that fends for itself, eating pine mast, roots, etc., usually a razor-back hog, scrawny, sharp-backed.

*pinfeather chick*

A very young and unusually sassy girl.

*pinhooker*

A cheat, a sharp trader, one who bids in an inferior product. He might buy poor tobacco at a warehouse auction, mix in some good tobacco and put it on the sales floor again.

*pink elephants*

Hallucinatory visions often seen by drunkards afflicted with delirium tremens.

*pinkiest*

The prettiest. "She's the pinkiest in the bunch."

*pinking in*

Growing pink, as the sky often does in the late afternoon. The pinking in of the day is usually just before dusk.

*pink of the evening*

Near sunset.

*pinnacle*

The top, the highest point, a tiny mound made by squeezing damp dirt in the butt of one's hand as in the game of marbles. Sometimes a player's marble might be in a declivity and if he cried out "pinnacle!" before anyone said "venture pinnacle," he was allowed to make a tiny mound and put the dinah, or pee-wee, on top of it and shoot at it with his taw.

*to pin one's ears back*

To thrash, to defeat, win dramatically over one's opponent.

*pins and needles*

A tingling sensation. "Every time I see her I get pins and needles up and down my back."

*on pins and needles*

To be excitedly anxious, apprehensive.

*p'int*

Point.

*pip*

Syphilis. Also disease among poultry.

An obstreperous or boring person. "There we were stuck all afternoon with them three pips."

*pipe down*

To cease talking, to grow quiet.

*Put that in your pipe and smoke it.*

Make the best of a thing if one can, take a matter under consideration.

*pipes*

Respiratory tract. "I can't even talk — my pipes are all clogged up."

*piping hot*

Cooking hot, very hot.

*pip-jenny*

A small eruption or boil, usually on the face, a pimple.

*pipkin*

A small tangy pippin apple. Also a type of prolific small-bolled cotton.

*pippin*

A darling, a cute girl.

*pipsissewa*

A delicious and fragrant little flower that grows in the deep woods. With its shiny evergreen foliage and its dainty summer blossoms, it is one of the most beautiful woodflowers in the Valley. Pipsissewa is evidently an Indian name and, according to some, it refers to the strengthening properties which the red men ascribed to it. It goes by many names such as ground holly, love-in-winter, rheumatism weed, and so on. A tea made from its leaves is supposed to be a very healthful tonic.

*pipsqueak*

A weak, unimportant person.

*piss ants*

Multitudinous little insects whose bite is stinging. "Charlie Biggs with his big feet has murdered more piss ants than any man alive."

*piss away*

To fritter away, to neglect one's opportunities. "He pissed away his chances when he was young, and now that he is old he's on the welfare."

*piss blood*

To work to exhaustion, to strain at a tough job, to overdo it.

*pissing post*

A gathering place for local politicians.

*piss off*

To leave in a hurry, to forego. "When he said that, he pissed off his chances."

*piss pot*

The chamber pot.

*pistol*

The penis.

A fiery person. "That Jeff Slocum is a plumb pistol."

*a hot pistol*

An eager beaver, a hard worker, a good performer. "Old Lefty Wilson was a hot pistol out on that mound today."

*pit-a-pat*

An onomatopoetic term simulating the scurrying footfall of a person or the distant galloping of a horse—pitter-patter.

*pitch*

To plant. "I pitched my crop last week."

Sales talk. "He made his pitch but I wouldn't buy."

A *pitcher* that goes too often to the well is broken at last.

*pitcher*

Picture.

*pitcher plant*

A strange and striking plant that grows in the deep wet swamps of the Valley. The leaves are various colors from green to striped yellow or even deep red, and the blossoms are most unusual, usually of a dead dull red rose color, although I have found some completely yellow ones. We used to go down into the swamp about a half a mile northwest of our house and gather great handfuls of these strange flowers in June. The inside of the flower exudes a sweet secretion and many an insect in search of this sweetness finds himself a helpless prisoner unable to escape up the inside of the blossom because of the opposing bristles. The Indians used this pitcher plant, sometimes called "side-saddle plant," to make a tea for the smallpox, and the Scotch settlers in the Valley fed a tincture of it to their children as an internal remedy. According to an old prescription, one ounce of pitcher plant root to one quart of water; one tablespoon given to the sick child every four or five hours would result in a cure.

Little *pitchers* have big ears.

*pitch in*

To begin, to set to work energetically.

He that *pities* another blesses himself.

*pit saw*

In the old pioneer days before the appearance of the cross-cut saw, the straight-bladed saw was used. It had a handle at each end. One man standing in a pit and one up above on a log, which had been put on a frame, would pull the saw up and down and thus turn out one slow flat board after another. The man at the bottom was called a pit sawyer and the one at the top the top sawyer. Usually a black man was in the pit and the white man on top, if a white man actually was working.

*pity*

A matter for regret. "It was a pity to burn his fiddle, but after he got sanctified, there was nothing else to do. Later, though, when he fell from grace, he cussed himself for being a fool and bought another from Sears and Roebuck."

*Pity* is akin to love.

*pizen*

Poison. Rotgut whiskey.

*pizen one's spring (pasture)*

To retaliate, to get revenge, to deliberately infect with venereal disease.

A *place* for everything and everything in its *place*.

Keep your *place* and your *place* will keep you.

*placket*

The opening slit in a woman's skirt. Also her pudendum.

*plague take it!*

A mild expletive.

*plaguey*

Indeed, truly, very. "Coysin knows plaguey well I won't be able to pay that note when it comes due and he expects to take my mule."

as *plain* as ABC

as *plain* as an old shoe

as *plain* as day

as *plain* as homespun

as *plain* as print

*plank*

To put down, to deposit vigorously, usually plank down.

*plank roads*

Roads with a plank-covered surface.

Some years before the Civil War and while longleaf pine forests were thick and plentiful, the plank road craze struck our state. The then thriving Valley town of Fayetteville was the center of it. The best known of these roads were the Fayetteville and Western and the Fayetteville and Albemarle. The state invested some \$180,000 in them and, according to Lefler and Newsome in their *History of North Carolina*, received a total of \$37,450 in dividends. Some eighty-four companies were chartered in North Carolina

in the 1840's and 1850's, but only about a dozen roads were built, they report. The most important one stretched 129 miles from Fayetteville through High Point and Salem to Bethania in Forsyth County. This was the longest ever built anywhere. These roads cost about \$1500 a mile — about one-tenth as expensive as railroads.

At that time the supply of longleaf pine timber seemed inexhaustible, and the sawmills in the Valley were kept busy supplying the road needs. Heavy timbers were laid down and the planks — some eight to ten inches wide and two inches thick — were placed across them and close together with big nails.

“Turnouts” were provided at proper intervals for vehicle-passing. Tolls were collected at tollgates at the rate of half a cent a mile for a man on horseback, one cent for a one-horse team and two cents for a two-horse team.

The roads prospered for a few years but, as the builders must have known, the planks soon rotted and had to be replaced. It was a losing proposition, and by 1860 most of the roads were out of use. The Honorable John A. Oates in his voluminous *The Story of Fayetteville* quotes from an overseer's letter of the times as to labor costs. “Two-horse teams were paid \$1.50 per day for hauling and laborers 50¢ per day or less. Numbers had to be sent away that came to hunt for work.”

The best laid *plans* of mice and men gang aft agley.

*Plans* on Sunday

Fail on Monday.

(A moralistic rhyme.)

*plant a crop before fencing it in*

To conceive a child before marriage.

*plantations along the Cape Fear*

Hilton Head

Sedgeley Abbey

Point Pleasant

Springfield

Sans Souci

Spring Garden

*Plant* corn when the dogwood leaves are the size of squirrel ears.

*planting signs*

The superstitions relative to the planting and harvesting of crops and the killing and curing of meat in connection with the zodiac are almost numberless. Any farmer's almanac will furnish the reader with an overflow of instructions.

*plashy*

Wet, full of puddles.

*plaster*

To splatter, shatter, to beat unmercifully as in a prize fight. “He plastered



that young fellow's behind with bird shot."

*plastered*

Drunk. "Evander Dewar came home plastered, and his wife rapped on his ding-dongs with the brush brooms."

*plaster saint*

A hypocrite, one who pretends to be a holy person and is in fact a two-timer.

*plat-eye*

A fabled and hideous hobgoblin, supposed to inhabit the Cape Fear River swamps. Tales about it are used often to frighten children or make them behave.

*Play* out the play.

*play a lone hand*

To be independent, to go as a loner.

*play cat and mouse*

To tease selfishly.

*play-children together*

Child comrades.

*played out*

Exhausted, finished.

*play for a sucker*

To treat as a gull, to entice into a bad deal.

as *playful* as a kitten

as *playful* as a puppy

*play havoc*

To tear to pieces, to ruin.

*play hob with*

To make a mess of.

*play it by ear*

To take things as they come without any prearranged plan.

*play party*

An evening of games and dancing, usually with more singing than instrumental music. Many of the old play party favorites are still popular today such as "Skip to My Lou," "Old Dan Tucker," "Sweet Betsy from Pike," and so on.

*play possum*

To pretend to sleep, to dissemble, feign death.

*play-pretty (purty)*

A toy.

*play the fool*

To act foolishly, to make a disastrous and silly financial deal, same as crapping out.

Durward Shaw was a well-to-do farmer in Averagesboro Township. He had three daughters and a foolish wife and, like many a poor man before him, tried to do everything he could “to please his women folks.” He sent his girls off to Greensboro to the Normal School and there they got highfalutin ideas. When they came home in the summer, they were above working in the fields and there they’d sit on the porch and swing, all dressed up in their bright frocks and their mother Virginia lally-gagging with them. And poor Durward was out in the fields hoeing away alone or ploughing his grassy cotton and corn. So it was that they would talk precise and look down their noses at any of the unlucky — or lucky, depending on how you looked at it — former beaus who for a while tried to continue their courting.

Finally their empty-pated mother Virginia and the girls all persuaded Durward to sell out his farm and move with them to Greensboro where customs and manners were more in keeping with their now delicate manners and tastes.

So he did, and his neighbors in the Valley heard no more of him for several years. In town, matters went from bad to worse. The girls in time married off to town clerks or grocery boys as empty-headed as they were and worked as best they could in the ten-cent or department stores. Then the mother Virginia died, and a saddened and pretty much penniless Durward returned to the haunts of his younger and happier days. He had no land now, so he tried to make a go as a tenant farmer. But having no “force,” as the term went in those days, applicable to children and most often an energetic tough-bodied wife, he had to give that up. He managed to borrow a little money from a local skinflint at 12 or 15 percent interest, got himself a gasoline engine, moved into the edge of Lillington and started grinding corn. He patched up an old single room Negro shack to live in and got himself a raw-boney old milk cow to stake out ’round and about to give him some milk.

Now as you go along the highway in the night you can see his smoky lamplight showing through the window where he’ll be reading his county paper perhaps. And sometimes as he reads, his gasoline engine is sounding away grinding corn.

Durward is now getting old but he still remains the quiet and kindly

fellow as always. He is well thought of by his neighbors who sympathize with him for the time — as both he and they put it — when he “went and played the fool.”

*play the game*

To measure up to one's responsibility, to act honorably.

*play thunder*

To make a bad blunder, to err badly, much the same as playing the fool. “Now ain't you just played thunder getting that pore gal in the family way!”

*play up to*

To humor another, to court goodwill, praise obsequiously.

*play with one's self*

Masturbate.

as *pleased* as a dog with two tails

as *pleased* as punch

*pleasure*

To please. “I've got artheritis (sic) so bad that it don't pleasure me none to try to pick my banjo.”

To have or give sexual satisfaction. “Every week I pleased my man — more than once, I'm here to tell you.”

*Pleasure* comes but not to stay.

Fly *pleasure* and it will follow you.

*plenty*

Excessive, much. “He was plenty good, that doctor.”

*pleurisy root*

See “butterfly weed.”

*plinkety-plink*

A sound made in imitation of a banjo's plinking.

*plonk*

Past tense of plank.

*plough*

To screw, copulate.

*ploughed*

Drunk.

*plough into*

To rush headlong into.

*plough lines*

The woven lines used as reins in guiding a mule or horse. We always had two plough lines fastened to the bit on either side of the mule's bridle and held them against the plough handles as we worked.

*plough point*

The iron or steel point on the front of the plough shank.

Burying rusty plough points in the ground around a barren fruit tree will cause it to bear.

He that by the *plow* would thrive  
Himself must either hold or drive.

*Plow* deep while sluggards sleep  
And you shall have corn to sell and keep.

Let him who puts his hand to the *plow* look not back.

*ploy*

A ruse, a maneuver, an intended move, a design. It is in heavy use now especially by newscasters.

*plug*

A worn-out horse or mule.

To cut a small segment from a melon to tell if it is ripe.

*plug along*

To push doggedly or slowly on.

*plugged nickel*

A phony, worthless thing.

*plug-hole*

A hole in the bottom of a boat to let water out when the stopper is pulled.

*plug-ugly*

A very ugly person.

*Plum*

A brand of chewing tobacco.

*plum*

The prize, the choice, an easy reward.

*plumb*

Completely, absolutely, used for emphasis or to add to a superlative. "I plumb forgot it."

*plumb sight*

A spectacle, an ugly scene. "The way that boy cut up at the picnic was a plumb sight!"

*plume up*

To praise.

*plump*

The sound of a heavy fall or plunge, also to enter suddenly or to take part suddenly in a scene. "Tom plumped himself into the middle of the room and the rest of us hushed while he took over."

as *plump* as a partridge

*plunder*

Odds and ends, trash, unimportant belongings.

To wander about, to poke about noisily. "I could hear him plundering about upstairs after I went to bed."

*plunder room*

A storeroom for odds and ends, broken-down furniture and miscellaneous extras.

*plunk*

A dollar. "I got a hundred plunks for that speech at Iowa."

*pluperfect hell*

A complete disaster or trouble. "Yessir, brother, the United States has played pluperfect hell by getting into that Vietnam mess."

*plush*

Flush, level with. "Get the door there plush with the frame."

*Plymouth Rock*

A heavy type of chicken popular in the Valley for its succulent fatness. It is usually a poor layer as compared to the white leghorns.

*pneumonia*

Sometimes referred to in desperate cases as "walking pneumonia." See "galloping pneumonia."

*sitting on one's pocketbook*

Wasting time on somebody else's money.

*pocket handkerchief*

In the old days in the Valley the handkerchief was always referred to as a pocket handkerchief.

*pocosin*

A jungle-like swamp, usually with much water and creepers in it. In the lower part of the Valley, the pocosins were marked with cypress knees and are the haunt of snakes, coons, 'possums and many a bird.

*podgy*

Pudgy, short, squabby, fat.

*podunk*

Reference to any trifling or obscure settlement or village.

*Clarence Poe*

One of the leaders of the Valley, a man who did more than any other to introduce modern farming methods in place of the one-gallus worker, the Boy Dixie plow and the mule. He was long editor of the *Progressive Farmer* and his work still lives after him.

The *poet* is born not made.

*point*

The nipple, the female breast. "That girl in the tight sweater shows her points all right."

*point of death*

Near death.

*Point Pleasure*

A famous old plantation house on the Cape Fear River, the home of Colonel James Innis under whom Washington served. Like nearly all the old mansions in the Valley, it has long disappeared.

*poison*

Bad news, a disliked person.

*poison ivy*

A woody nature shrub as well as a climbing vine. It grows anywhere and everywhere it is allowed to grow and is a source of serious skin poison to most people. When my wife and I built our house near Chapel Hill years ago, we found the woods infested with it. The tall white oaks around the spring we walled up were overrun with the stuff, and it took the work of several men two weeks to cut the vines away and burn them. Some of the "vines" I measured were four to six inches in diameter. So far as I know, time is about the best cure for the infection, though many Valley people

say that a tomato cut in two and rubbed on the infected part will bring relief.

### *Poison Stick*

A children's tugging game.

A stick is stuck upright in the ground. The children join hands in a circle around it and try hard to pull a player against the stick and knock it over or cause it to tilt by touching it. This player grabs up the stick and chases the others. When one is caught, he must help catch the others — and so on until all are caught and the game begins again. The last one caught is the winner.

### *poison sumac*

A prolific shrub that grows in the Valley anywhere from six to eighteen feet tall. It is most commonly found along the edges of damp swamps and it blooms in June. The fruit of the poison sumac is whitish or dun-colored and the harmless sumac fruit is red. It is said to be a stimulant and a narcotic in rheumatism and herpes.

Never buy a pig in a *poke*.

### *poke along*

To move slowly, to dawdle.

### *poke around*

To laze about, to move aimlessly.

### *pokeberry weed*

It is found almost everywhere from Canada and the Dakotas down toward Florida. The young shoots are often used for salad or a substitute for asparagus. The leaves and the berries and the roots are purgative and narcotic. A tincture of the ripe berries has been used as a popular remedy for chronic rheumatism, and the juice has been used for tumors, cancer, hemorrhoids and for all kinds of trouble.

My friend Mr. Mac, the miller, tells me that the pokeweed root is the best cure there is for itch.

"Yessir," he said to me one day, "it will cure the seven-year itch and that's the toughest skin disease there is. Old Prentice Thornwell had the worst case of it anybody ever heard of in the Valley country. He tried everything from worm grease to 'possum-gut salve. His skin got so tender with his everlasting scratching that he could hardly lie between the sheets. One day Miss Hettie Crews, the maiden schoolteacher, come over to Thornwell's house to confer with him about one of his children that had misbehaved in school. She found him in a pitiful condition, setting by the fire warming himself in the cold weather and scratching away. Out of her sympathy she told him about her own mother — how once she had had a terrible skin disease and a pokerooroot mixture had cured her. She told him that her mother

had some of the root beat up into a pulp and mixed with hot water, and she bathed in it, and it cured her absolutely.

“Well, Prentice was ready to try anything, so no sooner said than done. He sent his wife and some of the children out and they dug up a supply of root, beat it up with a maul and put it in a barrel, the way Miss Crews told him, and filled it with warm water. Prentice had it filled in the barn and he went out there, took off his clothes, and crawled in the barrel to give himself a good soaking. Meanwhile Miss Hettie and the women folk sat around on the porch talking and fixing things about the young boy’s misbehavior. All of a sudden a loud scream sounded from the barn, the stable door burst open and there came Prentice, naked as the day he was born, jumping and squealing and fighting at himself like a million hornets were popping their stingers in him. Mrs. Thornwell rushed out in the yard all aghast, same like the sky was about to fall in on her and, as Prentice tore by her, he shrieked out, ‘I’m in the flames of hell, woman. Fan me, fan me!’ And around the house he went and his wife after him, waving her apron in the air like shooing chickens into the coop. Miss Hettie fled indoors and shut herself away from the sight and the children hopped up and down in the yard laughing. Finally, Prentice could stand it no more and leaving his circling around the house, he made a beeline for the creek and he dived into the old tanning hole, cold as it was, and there he sat in the icy water up to his ears like a frog. The children later carried him some clothes down there and left him. About daydown he came back across the field dressed and in his right mind. He was so ashamed though that for weeks he wouldn’t go to church. But it cured him all right. Yessir, the itch never bothered him the rest of his three score years and ten. In fact, his hide was so tough that he could run through a briar patch and never get scratched. Yessir, pokeroot mixture will sure cure skin disease, whether it’s the two-weeks kind or the seven-year itch. You try it sometime, Mr. Green, and if you want some good eating, take the tender leaves when the pokeroot is coming up early in the spring and eat it. I’ve eaten many a mess of it myself and I’m sure it’s good for the health.

“Take the case of old McIntyre Prewett who lived down near Linden. He lived to be so old that in his later years he walked like he was squatting down, and when he couldn’t walk anymore, he lay up in his little house there, nothing but a bedful of bones, and dreened as dry of life as a basket of chips. After he quit moving and breathing any at all the neighbors waited a week to be sure he was dead and then they buried him. You ask me how old he was? I don’t know. Some say he was a hundred, some say he was a hundred and twenty-five. Anyhow, I remember his telling me once when I was a shirttailed boy about the time George Washington drove through the country there to the east and all the people in Tarboro went wild and fired off their one-pound cannon in celebration — yes, he said he was a grown young man



hissself at the time. And you know what made him live so long? I asked him that once, and he looked at me out of his little squeezed, squinched-up eyes and he said, 'Why, poke salat, poke salat.' They say he used to eat it by the peck. Then in the wintertime he lay up like a bear and drank cornmeal gruel made with water. Yessir, I recommend poke salat and meal gruel for these vitamin folks. Dang sight more sense in it I fully do believe and they're cheaper too, much cheaper."

*poke bonnet*

Often called polk bonnet. See "slat bonnet."

looks like he had swallowed a *poker*

*Poker*

The well-known card game which is the gambler's delight. The two kinds of poker are stud and draw.

Also a practical joke game. The players are seated in a circle. The leader takes a poker in one hand, pokes the floor with it, clears his throat and says, "You can do little who can't do this, this, this." He then gives the poker to his neighbor who is supposed to do exactly the same thing. Some of the players will forget to clear their throats as the leader had done. And so on.

*Cow Poker*

A game played by children usually riding in the car. We used to play this often when driving across country from Hollywood. Two children will choose each a side of the road, and they will count the number of cattle on the chosen side. The one who gets the largest number will win. If a graveyard is sighted and the opponent sees it, he can call out, "Graveyard!" and that cancels the number of cattle already counted by his opponent.

*Penny Poker*

Poker in which the betting limit is one penny. Also cheap doings.

*pokeroot tea*

Especially good for hog cholera.

*pokeweed*

One of the best folk remedy plants in the Valley. One ounce of dried root mixed with a pint of water and two tablespoons given as a dose was supposed to be a good treatment for chronic syphilis. An ointment made from the root was good for all kinds of skin diseases, and if the ointment was mixed with lard and the children's heads rubbed with it at night, every nit and louse would soon disappear. Indian runners on long journeys used to chew the leaves to quench the thirst, so it was said. See "pokeberry weed."

*pokey*

Jail, hoosegow. "I put him in the pokey and that'll sober him up."

*pole beans*

Running beans that are usually trained up poles. Some of the farmers in the Valley have a regular skein with strings running from pole to pole, up which the beans are trained.

*polecat*

A skunk, also a derogatory term applied to a low-down sorry person.

*Police*, police, don't get me.  
Get that nigger behind that tree.  
He stole money, I stole none.  
Put him in the guardhouse just for fun.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

as *polite* as a dancing master

*Politeness* is to do and say  
The kindest thing in the kindest way.

*politician*

A convict who through pull gets an easy job.

*poll-parrot*

An over-talkative person.

*poll tax*

A head tax.

When I was growing up, the poll tax in North Carolina was a dollar a head, and I remember once hearing my Uncle Bob Green tell about the time he had to collect the poll tax.

"It wasn't long after the State passed the poll tax law," he said, "that the niggers all up and down the Cape Fear Valley were past due on their payments. The high sheriff—he was my brother, your Uncle John Green, you remember—well, he said to me, he said, 'Bob, git out your horse and serve papers on them niggers.' So I did. I rode from house to house serving papers for the back taxes and collecting the defendants at the same time. It wasn't long till I had a whole drove of them following behind me and my horse on our way to Lillington. It began to snow like five hundred, and the whole string of them that I had collected did their level best trying to keep up with me and my horse, and I favored them some. When we got to the old McKay place, I said, 'Boys, it's a long way to Lillington over the river and I don't want to make you suffer too much. Will you folks promise to meet me there Monday morning at the courthouse?'

“ ‘Yeh, yessir, cap’n,’ they said sticking up their hands all quick like and then taking them down just as quick for they were all shivering and shaking from the cold.

“ ‘All right then,’ I said, ‘I’ll let you go. Meet me there Monday morning and we’ll dispose of your cases. Have your word be your bond.’

“ ‘Yessir, bond, our word be our bond, your honor, yessir.’

“Well, the next Monday morning every one of them was there and their cases were disposed of—except one. And he was lying at home near death’s door from the pneumonia he caught from following me that day. In fact he died soon after that. I didn’t hear about it till he was already buried. Yeh, yeh, I know it was bad for him to catch pneumonia like that, having no shoes to his feet hardly, but I didn’t know the bottoms of his shoes were out and his feet were freezin’ off when he was following behind me and my horse. He didn’t complain none. Anyhow, I don’t worry about it now. He ought to have paid his poll tax in the first place. That’s what he ought’ve done, Paul. Poor fellow.”

### *polly-pouts*

The sulks.

*Polly*, put the kettle on (three times)

For we’ll all have tea.

Sukie, take it off again (three times)

They’ve all gone away.

(A child’s song.)

### *pollywog*

A tadpole.

### *“Polly-wolly-doodle”*

Another popular nonsense song. We never failed to sing it at picnics, cornshuckings and young folks’ gatherings. Its author and composer are unknown to me.

“I went down South for to see my Sal—  
Sing Polly-wolly-doodle all the day.  
My Sal she am a punky gal.  
Sing Polly-wolly-doodle all the day.

“Fare thee well, fare thee well  
Fare thee well, my fairy fay,  
For I’m going to Louisiana  
For to see my Susyanna—  
Sing Polly-wolly-doodle all the day.

“A grasshopper sitting on a railroad track—

Sing Polly-wolly-doodle all the day.  
A-picking his teeth with a carpet tack.  
Sing Polly-wolly-doodle all the day.

“Went to the henhouse on my knees—  
Sing Polly-wolly-doodle all the day.  
Thought I heard a chicken sneeze.  
Sing Polly-wolly-doodle all the day.

“He sneezed so hard with the whooping cough—  
Sing Polly-wolly-doodle all the day.  
He sneezed his head and his tail right off.  
Sing Polly-wolly-doodle all the day.”

*polyphemus*

Another name for the penis.

*pone*

Swelling, a lump. “I’ve got a pone in my side,” said Mr. Martin, “and the doctor says I’ve got to have it cut out.”

*pony*

An interlinear translation, same as a crib.

*pony up to*

To sidle up to, to pay up.

*pooh*

An interjection of disbelief or derision.

*pooh-pooh*

To shrug off, to take lightly, to deride. “Nixon kept pooh-poohing Congress and now look at him.”

*poontang*

A woman’s sexual giving.

*poop*

To defecate. “Look, that baby’s pooped in his pants.”

*pooped*

To be exhausted, worn out.

The *poor* always ye have with ye.

as *poor* as a church mouse

as *poor* as a grasshopper

as *poor* as a rake

as *poor* as a skeleton

as *poor* as a snake

as *poor* as a whippoorwill

as *poor* as a winter crow

as *poor* as Job's turkey

as *poor* as owl shit

as *poor* as quilting frames

Gaunt.

Go sell what thou hast and give to the *poor*.

He that giveth to the *poor* lendeth to the Lord.

It's a *poor* religion that makes a man a worse neighbor.

He that oppressteth the *poor* reproacheth his maker.

He that giveth unto the *poor* shall not lack.

### *poorhouse*

The almshouse. The threat of the poorhouse was always hanging over the people in my neighborhood when I was a boy. It was a common expression round and about, "If we don't look out, we'll all land in the poorhouse." I've heard my father say that a thousand times.

### *"Poor Little Turtle dove"*

A love lament. The turtledove has for generations been a symbol of love, most often unrequited love, and nearly always the lyric includes the following lines—

"Poor little turtledove  
A-setting on a pine  
Grieving for his own true love,  
Just like I grieve for mine."

### *poor man's clock*

The sun.

### *poor man's weatherglass*

The common pimpernel, growing from eastern Canada down eastern United States to Mexico. It is poisonous to dogs and horses but is supposed to be sexually stimulating to humans. Its red flowers appear in mid-summer and are open only in bright sunshine. They close up at the approach of a storm, hence, the name for the plant.

*poor mouth*

Beggary, poverty. "He put the poor mouth on me and I parted with a dollar."

*poor outs*

Poor means, sorry methods, also sorry results.

*Poor Pussy Cat*

A game. See "Pussy Wants a Corner."

*poose-back*

To ride on a person's back like a papoose.

*poot*

To break wind, to fart.

*poots*

The nervous jerks, the whammy-diddles, the hicumstrikes. The "high-galloping poots" is an intensification of the poots.

*poo turkey*

Same as boo turkey.

*poozie*

Same as pussy.

*pop*

To burst into bloom. "If this warm weather keeps up a few more days, everything's gonna pop."

*pop-call*

A very short visit, one made without prior announcement.

*pope*

Boss, the head man.

sewed up tighter than the *pope's* drawers

*"Pop Goes the Weasel"*

A nursery rhyme and song.

*popgun*

A homemade toy "gun" made usually by cutting a joint of hollow reed and reaming it out. Then a berry or chewed wad of paper is inserted in it and, with a rammer slightly shorter than the joint, pushed on to near the end. Then with another pellet part way in, the rammer is reinserted. With a smart blow of the palm the pellet will be ejected with a pop.

*pop in*

To make a hurried call. "I'll just pop in and see how she's doing."

*pop off*

To hurry away, to lose one's temper, to shout loudly.

*popover*

A hollow quick bread shaped like a muffin.

*popping timbers*

There's a superstition that if the timbers of a house are heard popping in the dead of night, someone close by is soon going to die.

*poppy*

A favorite and colorful garden flower even though its bright red and showy petals last hardly more than one day. Since World War I it has had special significance for me, mainly because of the poem, "In Flanders Fields the Poppies Blow," by Colonel John McCrae. This poem became popular with the American and English troops, and many a time I recited it comfortingly to myself as I shivered in my dugout, expecting the falling German shells to cave in the dirt roof on me at any moment. The last stanza was especially sustaining.

"In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

"We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

"Take up our quarrel with the foe;  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch—be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields."

Young Colonel McCrae was later killed in battle.

*popskull whiskey*

Especially strong corn whiskey.

*popsquirt*

A fresh, sassy-talking person.

*popsy*

A fast woman.

*popsy-wopsy*

A term of endearment.

*pop the question*

Propose marriage.

*Pop the Whip*

A popular outdoor game. We used to play this at the old Pleasant Union School and have lots of fun. With a leader at the head of the line, the children, taking hands, would string out behind him. At the word "go" he would start running, pulling the line of young people after him. He would begin to coil the line, going faster and faster until those at the end sometimes went around so fast that they were flung off and turned somersaulting. The end girls, when they were flung off, would be embarrassed by their windblown petticoats.

*Populism*

A political movement in the South in the 1890's and early 1900's which advocated the rights and power of the people, the populace. The Southern Populists cooperated with the Republicans and Negro minority, and their platform denounced lynching and called for justice and fair dealing with all people, including the blacks. In some instances Negroes were given positions in the councils and local governing boards.

I remember that in my Valley neighborhood old Uncle Jerry McLean, a Negro with one of the greatest bass voices I ever heard, was put on the local school board. He could neither read nor write. I was a little boy but I remember my older half-sister appearing before him to get a certificate to teach school. He said to her — she reported later — "Bless yo' soul, Miss Allie, you wants to teach school, don't you? Well, honey, that's just what you's gwine do. Us passes you in de zamination. You jes' fill out yo' papers and mark 'em whatsomever they needs and go to it."

She got a little school some nine miles from our home at a salary of twenty dollars a month. She boarded at a neighbor's house for six dollars a month.

The Populist movement received a setback to its liberalism with the rise of the Red Shirts (q.v.).

*Possession* is nine-tenths of the law.

*possum apple*

Persimmon.



*possum haws*

This slender shrub, rarely becoming large enough to be called a tree, grows plentifully in swamps and along streams. We boys used to love to eat the blue-ripened berries. We still have a plentiful supply of these haws around our spring below the house. Sometimes called possum grapes.

*possum hunting*

Along with coon-hunting a very popular sport in the Valley until recent days. Since possums, like coons, do their feeding at night, a good possum or coon dog was always a valuable item. But now that the land has become a network of criss-cross hard-surfaced highways, illumined with automobile lights at night, both the hunting and the dogs have pretty much gone out of style. It was always a fact — and maybe there's some parable significance in it — that little possums climbed big trees and big possums climbed little trees. On our hunts, if the dogs treed a possum up a big tree, the decision usually was to leave the tree alone and not try to cut it down. Why so hard labor for so little result.

*possum over my persimmon*

One thing topping another, or one thing too deep for solving.

*possum piss*

Silly talk, twaddle.

Fat *possums* prowl late.

*possum's peter*

There is a common belief that the possum's penis is forked.

'*Possum* up de 'simmon tree,  
Coonies on de ground.  
Coonie say to de 'possum,  
"Shake dem 'simmons down."  
(Animal rhyme.)

*posted*

Informed, authoritative.

Protected by the law. "Since I've posted my land there's more hunting on it than ever."

*postes*

Posts.

*'postle*

The penis. "They say that movie sheik, for all his big talk, ain't got much of a 'postle on him."

### *Post Office*

A children's game.

My niece Buie Long recalls for me just how it is played, for I had forgot some of the details.

One player is blindfolded and stands in the center of the room as postman. Another is postmaster and has a list of cities, saying "I have a letter from ——— to ———." Immediately the players having the names of those two cities must rise and change seats, the blind postman trying to catch one of them or sit in one of the seats vacated. The player who is caught or whose chair is taken becomes the postman. Players may crawl, run, walk, dodge, or dive to get by the postman, but are not allowed to step outside the circle of chairs. An announcement that the "General Delivery" window is open causes a mad scramble, all the players changing chairs.

Another version of Post Office was a boys' and girls' courting game. All the boys are sent out of the room and a corner is curtained or screened off to represent the post office. A girl takes her place in the "post office" and another goes to the door and calls out the name of one of the boys waiting outside. She tells him there is a letter waiting for him in the post office. He goes into the "office" and the "postmistress" kisses him. Then the "mistress" can be changed and another boy is called in. And so on. Sometimes the girls are all sent from the room and a boy becomes "postmaster."

The *pot* calls the kettle black.

The *pot* which goes to the well will come home broken at last.

A little *pot* is soon hot.

An empty *pot* never boils over.

*go to pot*

To degenerate, to go to pieces, to have a breakdown.

*put on the big pot*

To cut a splurge or furnish an overflow of hospitality. "We'll put on the big pot when you come."

*upset the pot*

To make a mess of things, to ruin one's chances.

A grated Irish *potato* made into a poultice and put over a boil will draw it to a head.

A *potato* carried in the pocket is good protection against arthritis. Some people say a buckeye or an onion is better.

What has many eyes but can't see?

(Riddle. A *potato*.)

dropped like a hot *potato*

*One potato*, two potato, three potato, four—  
Five potato, six potato, seven potato, more—  
and on and on.

(A counting-out rhyme.)

*long potatoes*

These are sweet potatoes as contrasted with short, round (Irish) potatoes.

*round potatoes*

Irish potatoes as contrasted with long, or sweet, potatoes.

*small potatoes*

Unimportant matters, a person or thing of no importance.

His family is like *potatoes*, all that is good of them is underground.

Plant *potatoes* and other underground crops on dark nights.

Never bet on *potatoes* before grabbling time.

*potato hill*

The conical-shaped hill in which the sweet potatoes are stored in the winter. The method of preparing these hills was to take pine straw and place it on a bit of elevated land well-drained, pile the potatoes carefully on the straw, cover these potatoes with more straw and then cover them with dirt to shed the rain. Sometimes a shelter was put over the hill and the hill was always left open at the top for air. Most of the potatoes rotted in these hills, but the power of the folk custom continued until recently.

*Potato Race*

See "Sack Race."

*wild potato vine*

A tough ground-running vine, usually prolific in poor sandy land and hard to eradicate. The roots go very deep, almost as deep as the trumpet vine.

*pot-gutted*

Big-bellied.

*pot hanger*

A metal hook used in the old days to hang pots over the fire in the chimney for cooking.

*pothooks*

Illiterate scrawls, poor handwriting.

*pothooks and hen scratches*

The same.

*pot licker*

The liquid from boiling ham meat and greens together. It was counted a delicacy in the Valley and good for giving muscular strength.

*potluck*

Ordinary fare. "Stay and have dinner with us if you don't mind taking potluck."

*pot of gold*

A superstition that you can find a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

*pot-rack*

Imitation of the call of the guinea chicken. "During the funeral the guineas were pot-racking all round the house, the fools."

*potty*

A chamber pot for children.

Spoiled, rotting, decayed or decaying.

Dead drunk. "John Oxendine come home Sat'day night all potty and beat up his wife to a fare-you-well."

*pounce*

A loud explosion or noise. "Soon as I heard that loud pounce to the east I knowed that big boiler at Duke had busted."

When the *pound* speaks, the penny hushes.

*pound cake*

A cake made of pound measurements of ingredients, for instance, a pound of sugar, a pound of butter, a pound of flour and a pound of eggs, etc.

*pounding*

The bringing of alms or gifts to a destitute person and most often to the local preacher.

There was a mighty Negro preacher in the Valley once, so the folk tale goes, who delighted in being pounded by his congregation. He was a great glutton, this fellow was, and he would be profuse in his thanks and blessings for the pound of coffee or pound of sugar or whatever was brought to him. And sometimes his thankful congregation would bring him a bushel of meal or bag of flour. On one occasion a recently repentant sinner, one who had felt the power of the preacher's great exhorting, gave him a sheep. The great preacher was duly thankful and told his little wife to put that sheep in the pen and fatten it up because when Association Time came in the fall he would

bring some of his brethren home and they would have a big feast. And, bless the Lord, he would give her some good little loving on the side. Now this little woman was a meek creature and was terribly afraid of this big preacher. They had two little boys named Paul and Silas and they were, like their mammy, very meek and patient little fellows. So it was that the little woman, with the help of the boys, got some nails from around the washpot where naily boards had been burned and rigged up a little old pen and put the sheep in it. And they'd go out in the fields and pull crab grass and crop some of the wilted collard leaves and feed this sheep up mighty good. All the while the big preacher was working in the Lord's vineyard here and yon.

Now it happened that these little boys had something they loved better than life itself and that was an old traipsy dog that had taken up at their house. This old dog was a pitiful scraggly looking creature with thin frizzly hair, and so they named her Frizzle.

When the fall came on, the sheep was fattened up, and one morning just before the big preacher got ready to drive off in his little old buggy and bedslat mule, he told his little woman that he wanted the sheep cooked and ready for him that night. Sure and certain to the Lord there would be three big preachers to eat with them at suppertime. And so he drove off, flailing his little mule with the hard plough line as he went.

The little woman sharpened up the butcher knife and went out to the pen to kill the sheep. The little boys, Paul and Silas, were right with her. And right with them was the old dog Frizzle, wagging her tail and ready to help out. Well, the little woman went into the pen and got the old sheep by the burr of the ear, and then, wham, slashed across the old sheep's throat with the knife. The old sheep gave a squeal and a buck and tore out through the little old rotten pen and got away. The little woman went tearing down the hill after her, calling, "Co-sheepy, co-sheepy," with the boys right after and Frizzle barking along and trying to help out as best she could. On into the woods the little woman went, calling co-sheepy. But no sheep. And the little boys following along called, "Co-sheepy." And Frizzle, following after the sheep, kept on barking. They tried to call her back but she wouldn't come back because she was anxious to help out. And in the running about, little Paul stubbed his toe against a rock and he sat down and little Silas stayed and doctored him. The little woman went on into the woods after the sheep. But she couldn't find that sheep and she sat down on a log with the butcher knife in her hand and cried, for she knew what would happen to her if the big preacher came home that night and there was no sheep and no mutton on the table for him and the visiting brethren in the Lord. And old Frizzle come out of the woods and looked up in her face, trying to sympathize with her no doubt. Then the idea struck the little woman.

Well, sometime later up the hill she came and she was carrying the skinned sheep in her big apron. The little boys called out, "You ketched

him, you ketched him, Mammy.” So she went on to the house, and the little boys helped her get chips and splinters from the woodpile and build up a good fire in the old stove. So they cooked away on the sheep.

That evening the preacher came home with three other preachers and they went hallelujahing around the house and talking holy talk and blessing the little woman for the good cooking she had ready for them. And the house was full of the good smell of the mutton that had been cooked. So it was served up and the preachers et mighty hearty.

While they were eating, little Paul and Silas stood around waiting, their mouths just watering, waiting to get their share. But they must eat second after the big preachers had had their fill.

While the eating was going on, suddenly there came a sound — the pitiful bleating of a sheep. And all the while the little woman sat by the fireplace sucking on her teeth. When she heard the sheep, she shivered and shook. And the big preacher said to her, “Quit sucking on them teeth.” Then he explained to the brethren that she had mighty bad risings in her jaws and that’s the way she was. The sheep bleated again, and the preacher looked up and said, “What’s that?” The little woman shivered and shook worse now. And Paul and Silas hurried to the door and opened it.

And there stood the old sheep with his head hanging down and the slit in his throat showing. Then the preacher jumped up and said, “Lord-a-mercy, what’s happened!” And the boys, looking at the mutton on the table, saw what had happened, and little Silas or Paul, makes no difference which, called out and said, “Mammy done cooked our dog!” So she had, and the preachers had eaten heartily of Frizzle. They ran out into the night and called to the dog. And the big preacher called, “Come on, come up, dog. I want you to come up.” And pretty soon the dog did come up, and in the way you might think.

The visiting preachers were so mad when they found out what had happened that they didn’t jump on the little woman, they jumped on the big preacher and beat him nearly half to death. And that preacher fled from the neighborhood and was gone from there. Sometime later he sent and got the little woman and the boys, and the last that was heard from him he had a new congregation somewhere ’way down below Rocky Mount and was doing well.

But the house he had lived in was allowed to grow up in weeds and briars. Anyone passing on the road today can see it out in the field, all shrouded away now with sumac bushes and ’simmon sprouts. Some do say that the devil in the shape of a big dog stays in that house at night and goes abroad seeking what and which he may devour.

*no bigger than a pound of soap after a week’s washing*  
Very small indeed, pitiful, weak.

*Poverty* and laziness go hand in hand.

*Poverty* is a hard bedfellow.

*Poverty* is no sin but it's mighty inconvenient.

When *poverty* comes in at the door, love flies out through the window.

Give me neither *poverty* nor riches.

*poverty weeds*

Weeds that are native to poor soil such as the sandhills soil — milkweed, joint weed, sandhill spurge, indigo, and so on.

Keep your *powder* dry.

*powder one's nose*

A woman's polite term for going to the privy or bathroom, answering the call of nature.

*to sit on a powder keg*

To be in a highly dangerous or precarious situation or condition.

*to take a powder*

To run off, to flee from a subpoena, to vamoose. "John was to be there, but somewhere on the way he took a powder."

*power*

Much, many, a great plenty. "There was a power of people at the big meeting."

*powerful*

Very. "He's a powerful rich man."

*"Power in the Blood"*

Another popular and consoling big-meeting hymn beloved by the Valley believers.

"Would you be free from your burden of sin?

There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in the blood.

Would you o'er evil a victory win?

There's wonderful pow'r in the blood."

Then in the chorus we are told that the blood referred to is "the blood of the Lamb," the Lamb being Jesus. Moreover the song declares that the power of this blood can make you "whiter, much whiter than snow." My childish head used to puzzle as to how this could be. My old gray head bothers about it no longer, though now and then I like to hum the prancing tune to myself as I work about the house doing odd jobs of mending or painting.

*powwow*

A discussion, a caucus.

*Practice* makes perfect.

*Practice* what you preach.

Self-*praise* is half scandal.

*“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”*

The well-known Doxology or Old Hundred. I remember how relieved I used to be at old Pleasant Union Church when Preacher Wicker would ask Mr. Joe Long to lead the Doxology, for that meant the end of the service.

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him all creatures here below,  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host—  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.”

*prank*

To tease, to play tricks upon. Also to grease the end of a shovel.

*prat*

One's buttocks, behind, ass (arse). “The best part of his show were his pratfalls.”

*pray*

Please. Used for emphasis. “Do pray tell me what it's all about.”

*Pray* devoutly and hammer stoutly.

*Pray* for them which despitely use you and persecute you.

*prayer*

One of the dictionary definitions for prayer is “the offering of adoration, confession, supplication, thanksgiving, etc. addressed to God or to a god.”

The prayers that I grew up with and hear now and then are usually short on thanks and long on beseechings for help, guidance and protection. One of the most common prayers in the Valley has to do with sickness or the weather, especially in drought times. I remember more than once that the folks assembled at Pleasant Union Church and prayed for rain. In speaking of the matter, Barney Cofield, the Valley wit, once said, “I see you all folks are here praying for rain and I see none of you have brought your umbrellas.”

I remember too when I first got under fire in World War I with the British army in Flanders Field, I thought that I certainly would pray when the going got tough. But I was so scared and so busy taking care of myself that I never once thought of prayer or praying. The UNC football team used to pray before each game. The opposing team usually did the same, and



so the Almighty didn't have to bother.

*prayer book*

The ritual or scripture book used in some churches, especially in the Episcopal Service.

*Prayers* come from the same mouths as oaths.

*Preach* in your own pulpit.

*preach a funeral*

To bawl out, to berate, to scold. "After I broke that plate that woman surely preached my funeral."

*preacher*

A carpenter's handmade guide stick used in setting and spacing weatherboarding, brick and so on.

*"Preacher and the Bear"*

Another of our favorite field songs. And, as in all our work and around-the-house singing, we were not always true to the original words.

"A preacher went out a-hunting  
 Early one Sunday morn  
 And though 'twas against his religion  
 He'd taken his gun along.  
 He shot hisself some mighty fine quail  
 And a measly old Molly hare  
 And on his way returning home  
 He met with a grizzly bear.  
 The bear marched out in the middle of the road,  
 And when him the coon did see,  
 The coon got so excited  
 He clamb up a 'simmon tree.  
 The bear set down upon the ground,  
 The coon clamb out on a limb.  
 He raised his eyes to the Lord in the skies  
 And this is what he said to him.  
 'Oh, Lordy, you delivered Daniel from the lion's den  
 And Jonah from the belly of the whale and then  
 The Hebrew chillun from the fiery furnace, so the Good  
 Book do declare,  
 Now, Lord, if you can't help me, don't you help that grizzly  
 bear!' "

The original words and music for this coon song are by Joe Arzonias.

*Preachers'* children are the meanest children of all.

A *preacher's* son tends to turn out bad.

Gray mules never die, they turn into Baptist *preachers*.

When the *preachers* come, the chickens cry.

*preachify*

To talk and act piously.

*preachy*

Moralistic. "The trouble with so many of these labor dramas is they get preachy."

*precious*

Used for emphasis. "There are precious few people that live up to their preachings."

*Precious* things usually come in small packages.

*precious little*

Few, very small amount.

*precious plenty*

An overflow of supply.

*predestination*

The theory that whatever happens has to happen and actually man has no free will. Even Bertrand Russell, the noted English mathematician and philosopher, says that the theory cannot be disproved — or proved.

Since my Harnett County days I have believed that even if I had no free will, no freedom of choice, and it was all an illusive belief with me, still my responsibility for action would remain as part of that illusion and therefore I couldn't escape my duty of service to myself and the world around me.

It is easy to see how the doctrine of predestination has its place in Presbyterian belief — or in any religious doctrine, for that matter. A belief in God, the omniscient one, the all-knowing one, would allow for, nay, would require it. For by definition he is not only all-powerful but all-knowing and therefore knows what is to be. If he sees what is to be, then what is to be will be — so predestination or pre-determination. Then where does man's action, his behavior, come in? It must come in with his effort to live according to God's will. But suppose, says my corkscrew mind, God has already seen that I am to be lost, what avail is my effort? Or if he sees that I am to be saved, again what is my effort worth?

Well, as St. Thomas Aquinas said in his *Summa*, man must believe the

unbelievable if he is to have true religious faith.

Again I hear the loud shout of dialectical materialsim — but not the Russian voice — declaring its opposition.

A *pregnant woman* needn't try to make good pickles.

*prehaps*

Perhaps.

*prenatal influence*

A widely held superstition that certain happenings affect the unborn child. There are hundreds and hundreds of beliefs and folk practices connected with this in the Valley as elsewhere. See "birthmark." The first reference I know of occurs in the Bible where Jacob in working for old Laban wished to add to his spotted number of goats and sheep. He took some cuttings from the woods, peeled them in stripes, set them in front of the animals as they were breeding and, lo and behold, according to the Scripture — and who can deny the truth of that — his spotted flock increased tremendously. Smart boy, Jacob.

*all present and/or accounted for*

A military report by sergeant or officer to his superior as to the disposition of his men.

*preserves*

Fruit cooked in sugar or some syrup thinner and made into jams or jellies and stored in jars or glass containers. These were choice exhibits of many a housewife.

*presperation*

Perspiration.

*press the flesh*

To shake hands. "L.B.J. believes in pressing the flesh to get votes, and, man, he gets 'em."

*pretties*

Toys, trinkets, little playthings. Also a woman's breasts and sex organs.

A *pretty* baby makes an ugly girl.

*Pretty* is as *pretty* does.

as *pretty* as a peach

as *pretty* as a picture

as *pretty* as a pink

as *pretty* as a poppet

*pretty* as a rosebud trimmed in dew

*a pretty*

A bet or an ante. "I bet you a pretty I can run faster than you can." In the Valley the word "pretty" was almost always pronounced "purty."

*Pretty Bird in My Cup*

See "Put a Bird in My Cup."

*not to do pretty*

To act immorally. A softened assertion involving the immoral behavior of a woman.

*Pretty Girl's Station*

A guessing and chasing game. Two sides are chosen and they walk away from each other after each leader has chosen his or her station. Then one group marches back toward the other. The second group then calls out, "Where you from?" First Group—"Pretty girl's town." "What's your trade?" "Lemonade." Second Group—"Go to work." And then they go through the pantomime of making lemonade and, while they are making the pantomime, the other group tries to chase them before they can get back to their station. Sometimes one group marches toward the other making a pantomime of their work but not naming it. And when the work is guessed correctly the chase is on. All who are tapped must join the other group and this continues until all the players of one group have been captured or they decide to quit and do something else. This game is sometimes called "Lemonade."

*Prevention* is better than cure.

An ounce of *prevention* is worth a pound of cure.

*prevision of death*

A foreseeing of one's fate. Many people in the Valley believe that the future can be seen, especially the tragic future in reference to one's own death date. See "death prophecy." They say that Myatt Northington had this gift.

Myatt was a merry light-hearted man and he prophesied even to the day and the hour when he would die. In fact he was made more famous in the Valley by dying than he was by living. He said the news of his taking off had come to him in a dream, a voice that said to him as plain as day that he was to die at such and such a time next year—or as he put it, "called home to heaven"—and he better get ready to go. During that one year of grace he made a good crop, paid up all his debts and got his life in order. He picked out his pallbearers and preacher and had his tombstone cut with the epitaph—"Walk about Zion and go around about her, tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces that ye may tell

it to the generation following. Psalms 48: 12-13." Myatt liked his rolling words as well as precision.

Of course most everybody laughed and made no little fun of him, for they felt about him the way most of us do about these ignorant sanctified people who are always prophesying the end of the world on a certain day. Also they remembered Gaster French and his prophecy a few years before. Gaster got his Holy Roller religion down at Falcon camp meeting and soon after that he heard a voice, he said, telling him to get ready for the end of the world which would come on the second Sunday in April. So he sold out his farm and team and sat down to wait for Gabriel to blow on his horn. Gaster was a notorious lazy fellow and the sitting and waiting came easy for him. The fateful day came and passed and nothing happened, and of course he had to get up from there where he was sitting and go to work to keep from starving, for the sun rose just the same. Later he died in the county poorhouse.

But Myatt was a better prophet. On the day before he was to die he went around to see all the neighbors and say goodbye, asking them for any messages they might want to send to loved ones in yonder world. A lot of the wags, including Barney Cofield, sent messages to folks in hell, including Bull Broadhuss, telling him to take it easy there and not to whip the devil too often. But old Myatt laughed and said he wasn't going to hell.

When the next day came he dressed himself in his burying clothes, put out the two big English pennies he had saved to place on his eyelids and lay down in his bed. As the clock struck three, as the voice had said, he turned his face to the wall and quietly breathed his last. At his funeral a great concourse of people gathered and many of them got converted to God because of Myatt, believing that there must be some kind of spirit or spirits that could speak to men and tell them the future if they only knew how to listen and watch. And Ollie Marshall, the Linneyville windowshade and perpetual motion inventor, was so convinced of it, he tried to make a contraption with a big ear on it to listen to spirits talking. Ollie was a determined fellow and he worked and worked at it. And he worked so hard at it and got so wound up in it that he finally lost his mind and had to be shut up in the asylum in Raleigh. They say Ollie hears spirits there all the time and does a lot of preaching behind his restraining bars to an unhearing and lost world.

The *price* of wisdom is above rubies.

Every man has his *price*.

*prick*

Penis.

*a big prick*

A show-off, a braggart.

*all prick and no pence*

All show and braggadocio, all front and no back.

A standing *prick* has no conscience.

It is hard to kick against the *pricks*.

*Pride* goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.

*prides*

A man's testicles or a woman's breasts.

*primed*

Liquored up and ready for a good time.

*prime the pump*

To use water from another source to get a dead pump started. Also to create federal or welfare jobs in order to stimulate the economy.

*prime tobacco*

To crop the leaves as they ripen, beginning at the bottom and moving upward. It is back-breaking work at first but becomes easier as the leaves are cropped higher and higher toward the top.

*Primitive Baptists*

Known also as "Hardshell Baptists," this sect, formed in North Carolina about 1830, was more Calvinistic in its belief as contrasted with the Freewill Baptists. The Primitives were opposed to Sunday schools and to any "fuss and fancy doings." A strict interpretation of the Bible as the inspired word of God, every jot and tittle of it, was the heart of their doctrine.

*Prince of Darkness*

One of various names for Satan or Beelzebub.

*"Prince of Parthia"*

A romantic tragedy written by Thomas Godfrey (1736-1763), a poet and playwright living in Wilmington, N.C., at the time. The drama was produced in Philadelphia on April 24, 1767, four years after his death, and has the distinction of being the first play written by an American to be professionally produced. Godfrey died near Wilmington on April 3, 1763. He is buried in the old St. James churchyard there. Years and years ago I went to visit his grave and made a snapshot of his simple headstone that bore, as I remember, only his name and the date of his birth and death. Not long ago I visited the churchyard again and could find no trace of his grave. Nor could any local person, including the sexton and minister, help me. As for the

photograph I made, that is lost too. But the play remains in a volume entitled "Prince of Parthia," with a 74-page Introduction by Archibald Henderson, who served also as editor of the publication by Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1917. See "Thomas Godfrey."

*princess tree*

The paulownia tree.

The *principle* is the thing.

*prink*

To primp, to make a fastidious toilette, to unduly adorn oneself.

I was in *prison* and ye came unto me.

Stone walls do not a *prison* make, nor iron bars a cage.

*Prison Base*

A very popular children's school game of chase in the Valley. Two leaders are chosen and then these choose their followers alternately. Each group leader selects a place some fifty yards or so from that of his opponent, usually using a tree or drawing a ring around on the ground. And each dares the other. The chase is on and anyone who is caught must enter the opponent's prison and his comrades seek a chance to free him. But if, in the seeking, he himself is touched, then he also becomes a prisoner. Most often the fleetest side wins by getting all the opponents in prison and then the game ends.

*prissy*

Effeminate.

*Institute of Private Affairs*

A very vulgar and low-down society founded at the University of North Carolina by some of the professors, with meetings every two weeks. At these meetings the whole purpose was to tell as low-down and dirty stories and experiences as possible. Anything decent was forbidden.

I was telling Carl Sandburg about our Institute once when he was visiting us and this prompted him, I guess, into misbehaving before some ladies who had come down from the University at Greensboro to sit around and admire Carl. We were having dinner when they arrived. They goosed and goosed over him until he was offended enough, I guess, to start telling stories. "Did you ever hear," he asked, smiling around him, "about the two men who had a bet as to which could eat the dirtiest?" The ladies smiled sweetly and said they hadn't, would he please tell them. So then he let forth into one of the roughest anecdotes I ever heard. I looked at my wife, who was terribly ashamed. But the ladies from Greensboro didn't blink an eye. They smiled and applauded when Carl finished telling about the two guys who got some big tablespoons and went out to see what dirty things they could find to

eat in the cow pasture and around. And one of the men said, "I can't eat mine, it's got a hair in it."

*privateers*

Freebooters and half-pirate seamen who used to prey upon the commerce at the mouth of the Valley. Sprunt in his *Tales of the Lower Cape Fear* tells much about this.

*private eye*

A detective.

*privates*

A man's or woman's genitals.

*pro and con*

For and against. "Consider all the pros and cons and then you'll know how to vote."

*Procrastination* is the thief of time.

*profane language*

There was a belief that it was a dangerous thing to indulge in blasphemous language in a storm at sea or in a thunderstorm on land. I remember when I was a boy hearing the dreadful story of a man who, hurrying across the fields to his house, lost his hat in the wind or a thunderstorm. He let out an oath and the lightning struck him and killed him. How the people ever knew that he let out an oath before he was killed I don't know.

What shall it *profit* a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

*progue*

To forage, to wander around.

*project*

A device, a matter of concern. Also as a verb, to fool with, pick at.

*promenade*

To walk with one's partner in a folk dance.

*promenade all*

A square dance call in which partners join crossed hands, right hands above the left, and march around the room.

A *promise* should be given with caution and kept with care.

*Promised Land*

Land to which the Jews went after they left Egypt. Canaan land. Also it refers to the heaven and the hereafter. I remember how old Mr. Tom Long used to line out the song, "On Jordan's stormy banks I stand," and then



go on to the chorus when he would ring out sonorously,

“Oh, who will rise and go with me?  
I am bound for the Promised Land.”

*prong*

A branch of a divided stream.

The *proof* of the pudding is in the eating.

*proon*

To brood or worry. “He sits and proons over his troubles. No wonder he won’t get better.”

Also sighing, murmuring. “I love to hear the wind prooning in the trees.”

*prophecy*

Foretelling the future. There are machines now along all of our streets into which you can put a penny and get the prophecy of the future. Prophecy is an act of divination, of seeing into the future, similar to clairvoyance. There are multitudes of signs and omens as well as machines which help one to prophecy. For instance, an autumn with many acorns or nuts or berries foretells or prophesies a hard winter. And the newspapers carry daily horoscopes.

A *prophet* is not without honour, save in his own country.

Beware of false *prophets*.

There shall arise false *prophets*.

Man *proposes* but God disposes.

*proposition*

A difficulty, a hard task, a tough undertaking. “Getting water up that hill, gentlemen, is a proposition.”

*props*

Properties, as in a theatrical production.

*Prospect Hall*

One of the famous old homes along the Cape Fear, now perished.

*protection*

Chaperonage. “Oh, yes, on all the hayrides of the young people some older person would go along for protection.”

*protection against witches*

James Webster, an old Negro in Wake County, says that a silver dollar is the best protection against witches there is, and not only that, he adds,

protection against sickness. "Yes sir, Mr. Green, ever since I was sixteen years old I've had a silver dollar with me except for two days and then I had fifty cents." Most of the time James carries his dollar in his mouth. Some of his neighbors, because of his talk about witches, believe he is a witch doctor and is endowed with a power to tell fortunes. A lot of young people come to him to get their fortunes told. In recent days he's been making some extra money that way. The dollar in his mouth, he says, gives him power not only to keep the witches off and to keep good health but maybe give the young folks good advice. One reason that it has such power, he says, is that on it is inscribed, "In God We Trust." And no ha'nt, he says, can stay around where God is. He goes on to say that he has carried this dollar or one like it in his mouth most of the fifty-eight years. "Yes sir, I even sleeps with it," he says, "and when 'In God We Trust' gets to be worn off, I gets me a new dollar. 'Cause you got to have the words right there spang and bright to have the right power and protection."

*proud*

To be in heat. "My bitch is prouiding and I've got to shut her up."

Swollen. "There's a lot of proud flesh around that boil."

as *proud* as a king

as *proud* as a peacock

as *proud* as punch

*do oneself proud*

To take especial pride in an action one has done. I remember long ago reading a letter written by my mother when she was a young girl which said, "I went to Cokesbury Saturday and bought myself proud." Evidently she'd bought some gay dresses or trimmings.

*Proverbs* are the wisdom of the ages.

He who will not *provide* for his own house is worse than an infidel.

*providentially hindered*

Hindered by an accidental happening or unforeseen circumstance, usually attributed to divine interference.

A good *provider* is never without a mate.

*prune*

A sissy, a square, a prig, an unlikable person.

*full of prunes*

One who is unreliable as to truth or reporting of fact.

*p's and q's*

Good manners. "You better watch your p's and q's when you eat at Aunt Emma's house."

*psychiatry*

A pseudo-science now sweeping the world, making great inroads on the healing power of religion. But the Catholic confessional still stands as some of the best psychiatric therapy.

*psychoanalysis*

Originated or at least made popular mainly by Sigmund Freud who used dream analysis, even automatic writing, to recover forgotten events. Suppressed desires and other disturbing subconscious items are part and parcel of his "science." Here the psychic disturbance, according to him, is affected by bringing the suppressed items into the full consciousness of the patient.

"Yes sir, I went to the head shrinker for six months," said Miss Callie Timberlake, "three times a week at forty-five dollars a clap. And finally I told him I was broke and didn't have any more money. This didn't bother him at all for he said he was on the verge of telling me the week before that he considered me cured. So he let me go. My advice to people hunting psychiatric help is to go ahead and try it and then when they find out it's not helping much, let the doctor know that the money is running out, and the first thing you know you'll be cured."

My young cousin, a very bright girl at the university, got into a depression and she got started going to the psychiatrists. She went from one to another, and I guess Aunt Sally, the Negro washerwoman, helped her as much as anybody. Talking to her one day, Aunt Sally said, "I don't see, honey, how you're ever going to get rid of that desperation if two or three times a week you go and lie down on a cot and just keep talking about it to the doctor. I know you say the doctor says you've got to get it out of you, give voice to it. But seems to me that the thing to do would be to try to forget it and get on with your work, put your mind on other things. That's the way my mammy taught me. If things were bothering me and I couldn't do nothing about 'em, then forget 'em, start doing something else and gradually get your mind off it, and as you work at something else, get to thinking about something else, the first thing you'll know, you're in better shape than ever. Yes ma'am, that's what I say. Honey, you do it."

See "Crazy is as crazy does" and "off one's chest."

A *public* office is a *public* trust.

*pucker up*

To crinkle one's face as a child preparatory to crying.

*pud*

Easy, a crip. "Collier Cobb's Geology I is a pud — take that."

*puddin'*

A term of endearment.

What's your name?

*Pudding and tame.*

Look up the black dog's ass

And you'll see the same.

(A vulgar rhyme.)

*puddin'-headed*

A stupid person.

*puddle*

To urinate.

*puddle-jumper*

A sorry secondhand car, or a worn-out horse.

*puff like a steam engine*

To breathe heavily after activity.

*puff adder*

A harmless snake. We boys used to kill them after we had stirred them up and got them to puff out their throats in frightful distension.

*puffball*

Devil's snuff box.

*puff guts*

A fat person.

*puke 'em*

A jocular but somewhat cynical rhyme relative to medicinal practices in the saddlebag days when the doctors had little or no medicines to cure anything:

Puke 'em, purge 'em,

Bleed 'em, sweat 'em.

If they die, then

Damnit, let 'em.

*puke weed*

Vomitweed, Indian tobacco.

*pull*

To serve time in jail, the penitentiary or on the chain gang. "He's got to

pull two years on the road.”

If *pull* won't work, try shove.

*pull a face*

To grimace.

*pull a long bow*

To exaggerate, to cut a splurge.

*pull a plug on*

To deflate, to contradict, scuttle.

*pull coattails*

Influence by gifts or bribery, or by flattery or servile obedience.

*pull down*

To weaken by sickness. Also win in a handspike lifting contest by pulling the other fellow down.

*pull down on*

To shoot, as at an escaping prisoner.

*pulled*

Referring to being stopped for some highway lawbreaking.

*pullet*

A teen-age girl.

*pulley-bone*

The chicken wishbone. We used to always do our little folk act at the table when one found a wishbone. Two people grasped the prongs of the wishbone, each made a silent wish and then they pulled till the prongs broke. The one who got the longer piece of bone was the winner. Also we played that he could hang this longer piece over the door, and the next person to enter would be the one he or she would marry.

*pullikins*

Forceps. When I was a little boy once I had a sore tooth, and my father told me to go across the creek to see John Allen Matthews and get him to use his pullikins on it. So I walked over to Mr. Matthews' house, about two miles away. He was a blacksmith, a great big portly man with huge dirty hands. He told me to open my mouth. He felt the tooth. Then he got out a pair of rusty pliers, which he called pullikins. He took hold of the tooth and yanked it out. "That'll cost you a quarter," he said. I had happened to bring some money because, as everybody knew, Mr. John Allen was very stingy. He was a moneylender and nearly every year my father would borrow fifty dollars from him in the spring, get forty and pay the fifty back at six

percent interest in the fall.

Another man who used the pullikins a great deal was one Duncan Deer. He was a Valley strong man and lies buried there in the Little Bethel churchyard with a stone over him, inscribed to his virtues as a good Christian and provider for his family. Nothing was said about Duncan Deer's high temper and his proclivity for fighting. He was a cantankerous fellow and, like bully Major Walker who lived farther down the Valley near Wilmington, he was always in a row at any public meeting. For instance, he rarely went to a shooting match or election or a sociable that he didn't whip at least two or three people. No man was a match for him. It was said that once when his prize bull attacked him in the pasture, he grabbed the animal up in his arms, squeezed him till he bellowed, then threw him over the fence into the woods, saying to the bull that if he ever came back there he'd catch him by the nose and horns and twist his damned head off. Whether the bull understood him or not, the animal struck the ground running and raised the dust going away from there. Nor was he ever seen around Duncan's place anymore. Duncan repented of his act and finally advertised in the county paper for the bull but in vain. Duncan had a quaint custom connected with his fighting. He always carried a pair of pullikins in his pocket and when he'd get his opponent down on the ground, he'd extract one of his teeth and let him up. If he happened to have a second fight with the same man, he'd pull two teeth and a third time three. Folks were afraid of Duncan Deer all right and few were sorry when his turbulence ended in death, a quiet death in his sleep, from a heart attack, the doctors said. Yes, death was one strong man he couldn't whip.

*pull in*

To arrest.

*like pulling eyeteeth*

A difficult job, a tough task.

Roger Bethune and Corliss Neal got into a fight down near Linden, and Corliss broke out one of Roger's teeth, root and all, so it was said. Being a blacksmith and a toothpuller too, Corliss made Roger a new tooth out of a piece of hickory wood and then drove it in and said, "Now, Roger, you're fixed good as new." They both were drunk and, of course, Roger was as addled as Corliss was. Well, next day when he sobered up, his new eyetooth gave him a fit. The dampness in his mouth had caused it to swell as if he'd been stung by a swarm of hornets. He was a looking sight, as they say in the Valley. His wife drove him fast to Dunn and Doctor Bain, the dentist, nearly tore off his jaw, so Roger reported later, getting that wood tooth separated from him. Corliss had certainly done a good job. Dr. Bain looked at him and said, "I've always known how hard it is to pull an eyetooth, Roger, but, my, my, this is the worst job I've ever had." And so he let him

loose, and Roger went straight to the hardware store, bought himself a pistol and went looking for Corliss. But some of their friends stopped him and persuaded him to give up the gun. From that day till he died, he and Corliss had no dealing with each other.

*pulling fodder*

See "fodder bundle."

*pull in one's horns*

To back down from a fight, or to renege on one's too-forward bet or statement.

*pull in the collar*

To work energetically, faithfully. "That's a good mule, he's always ready to pull in the collar."

*pull off*

To commit, to perform, to get done. "If he can pull off that scheme, he might become president."

*pull one's freight*

To leave, to hurry away.

*pull one's leg*

To fool, to trick.

*pull one's load*

Do one's part.

*pull-ons*

A pair of women's drawers.

*pull out*

To quit, resign. "He gets mad in every game, and look for him to pull out."

*pull over*

To move to one side, to stop. "Pull over, buddy, you're going too fast."

*pull strings*

To use influence, to get one's way.

*pull the chain on*

To repudiate, to betray. "I had that job all staked out till the boss pulled the chain on me."

*pull the rug out from under*

To let down, to remove support.

*pull the wool over one's eyes*

To fool, to outwit.

*pull through*

To live through a serious illness. "Have you heard? Cleveland Matthews is down mighty low with the fever — and he's not expected to pull through."

*pull up*

To arrive, stop. "When I pulled up here yesterday, I saw my first magnolia in bloom."

*pull up stakes*

Leave, sell out and go to another place to do business.

*pulp magazine*

A cheap publication.

*pumped*

Interrogated.

*pumpkin*

A facetious term of praise. "He's some pumpkin."

Before *pumpkins* are suitable for eating, frost must fall upon them.

*pump one's peter (prick)*

To masturbate.

*pumps*

Low-cut ladies' shoes.

*beat to the punch*

To get there first, to strike first.

*to lose one's punch*

To lose heart, interest or desire. To become melancholic.

*Punch Board*

A guessing game. One person stands with his back toward the others. Then someone punches him once in the back. He turns around quickly and tries to guess who it was. If he is successful, the player who is guessed must take his place and be punched.

*Punctuality* is the soul of business.

*to puncture one's balloon*

To deflate one's self-esteem, ego.

*punish*

To suffer, to endure. "I got arthrititis mighty bad and at night I can't sleep. I just lie there and punish and punish."

The *punishment* fits the crime.



*punk*

Rotten wood, usually the wood of a pine stump.

A worthless, degenerate person, a gangster hanger-on.

To feel sick, down-spirited, melancholic.

*punkin*

Pumpkin. Also a term of affection.

*punying* or *on the puny list*

To be ailing, to be under the weather.

*puppy*

A young fellow, an adolescent boy.

*puppy love*

Adolescent infatuation.

*pure*

Complete, absolute, entire. "That's the pure truth I'm telling you."

as *pure* as an angel

as *pure* as driven snow

as *pure* as gold

as *pure* as snow

as *pure* as the lilies of May

Unto the *pure* all things are *pure*.

*pure gold*

Of irreproachable character.

*purellia*

A Valley flower, the twin bluebell.

*purely more*

Really, certainly. Used for emphasis. "He purely more laid the hickory on."

*purging*

The death froth on the lips of a corpse.

*purp*

Pup.

*purple*

Royal.

A full *purse* has many friends.

You can't make a silk *purse* out of a sow's ear.

*purslane*

"Pussly," a garden curse. My father used to have us children pull it from the garden to feed to the hogs.

*purty*

Pretty.

*Purty* is as purty does.

Same as Handsome is as handsome does.

*purty fix*

Used satirically of a bad situation or a bind.

*purty-looking sight*

A satirical term.

*Purvis*

The last man hanged in my native county of Harnett. I remember hearing about the hanging when I was a boy, and my older half-brother John once pointed out to me some of the pieces of the timber of the scaffolding down just below the old courthouse in Lillington. I was so impressed by the story of Purvis and his fate that I used his name more than once in different folkplays and stories. Recently Malcolm Fowler, the Cape Fear Valley historian, and I were meeting in Lillington and we took a walk down below the courthouse and stood there where Purvis was hanged and talked some about that occasion. Then Malcolm told me something that I'd never heard connected with the hanging. He said that it had been handed on down in the neighborhood that there was a folk belief that a man when he was hanged usually had a sexual orgasm. And Malcolm said that some of the Lillingtonians or Harnett County roughnecks laid bets that this would happen in the case of Purvis. So Malcolm said the story goes that immediately after Purvis was hanged and his body was swinging there in the air several of these bettors ringed around him to hide him from view, took down his trousers and sure enough, according to the story, he had ejaculated.

*push*

Ambition, drive, energy.

A *push* is equal to a pull.

When *push* comes to shove, things have got to move.

A critical situation, a time that calls for action.

*pushed for*

In lack of, short of. "I'm pushed for time right now and I can't come over there."

*pushing up daisies*

To be dead, buried.

*push in the collar*

To work very hard.

*pushover*

A gullible person. "He's always been a pushover where women are concerned."

*push the stop button*

To put an end to.

*puss*

Face, a countenance. "After his girl kicked him he went around with a sour puss for a whole year."

*pussly*

Purslane.

*pussy*

Cunt. The female pudendum, also the act of copulation. "He was determined on a piece of pussy from that woman and finally he got it, and he got more than that — Amen. Dr. Jones is treating him."

*pussy bandit*

A rapist.

"*Pussy Cat*, pussy cat, where have you been?"

"I've been up to London to look at the queen."

"Pussy Cat, pussy cat, what did you there?"

"I frightened a little mouse under a chair."

(A jingle.)

*pussy-gutted*

The same as pustle-gutted.

*Pussy Wants a Corner*

A game, also known as Poor Pussy Cat. Each child gets into a corner of a room, and one child stays out, wandering from one to another. He calls out, "Pussy wants a corner," and puts on quite a show of "Poor pussy, poor pussy!" making a meow the while. As pussy goes around asking for a corner, the answer always is "Go to the next neighbor." As she moves from one neighbor to another, the last two players try to change corners

and pussy tries to slip into one of them before the new occupant reaches it. If she is successful, that player becomes the homeless "poor pussy," and the game goes on.

*pustle-gutted* or *pustle-gut*

Pot-bellied. A term used in reference to a mule. "You can't make a good crop with that old pustle-gut."

*Put a Bird in My Cup*

A popular game with young people. It was sometimes called "Pretty (Purty) Bird in My Cup." A group would be assembled in a room. The first player, often chosen by a counting-out rhyme or simply agreed upon, would stand facing the players, holding a cup with water in it in one hand and a balled-up rag in the other. He would dip the rag in the water now and then to keep it sopping wet. In his mind he would choose a bird and give slight hints as to what it was, as to color, song, habits, etc. The players in turn would try to guess the bird. The lucky (or unlucky) one who guessed correctly would receive the wet rag full in his face if the aim was good. Then he would become "It" and the game would continue.

*put a bug in one's ear*

To tell a secret or give a warning.

*put across*

To settle a deal, to achieve a victory or win out in a contest.

*to put a nail in one's coffin*

To shorten one's life by some ill behavior or act.

*put a saddle on backwards*

To get things all mixed up or the unimportant things first.

*put a spoke in one's wheel*

To hinder, to stop, to confine.

*put away*

To eat, to drink excessively. "I saw Damon Runyon put away two pots of coffee one day at lunch in Hollywood."

To bury. "I can't come Monday. I've got to go help put away Miss Minty Gaskins."

*put 'em up*

A hold-up command to raise one's arms.

*put heads together*

To take counsel one with the other.

*put it past one*

To fool or try to deceive. "You say you wouldn't leave your cash register unlocked? — Well, I wouldn't put it past that fellow about stealing."

*put my mouth on him*

To scold.

*put off on*

To disparage unduly, to belittle.

Never *put* off till tomorrow what should be done today.

*put off the big blanket*

To return to simplicity, to relax.

*put-on*

Pretense, proud behavior. "Such a put-on as she was I never saw before."  
"She said she was sick but it was all a put-on."

*to be put on (upon)*

To be abused, mistreated, having to do more than one's share.

*put one on*

To fool or deceive one. "I don't mean to put you on but that's the way it is."

*put one's cards on the table*

To come clean, to be frank and honest.

*put one's feet under the table*

Make oneself at home in another's house, accept hospitality, make a visit.

*put one's foot down*

To act emphatically, give a stern command.

*put one's foot in his mouth*

To make a faux pas, to speak out of turn or to act or speak awkwardly.

*put on the dog*

To act vainly, behave over-showily, assume a false grandeur.

*to put on the shelf*

To retire a person from action, to exclude. "Yes, Paul, they've put me on the shelf now that I'm so old."

*put out*

To disappoint, to embarrass. "John will be terribly put out if you don't wait for him."

To hurry off. "He got mad and put out for home."

To work hard, be energetic, also used sexually. "She's a woman that puts out, yessir."

To set, to start. "He put out a fire in the woods and the county slam nearly 'bout burnt up."

Irritated. "I was so put out about his telling that lie on me I couldn't shake hands with him at church."

*put out the light*

To kill.

*put over*

To close a deal, to accomplish a purpose.

*put pepper in his nose*

To irritate, to bother.

*putt*

Put. "Putt your hand in your pocket just one more time, hoss cake, and next time you go to buy gloves you won't need but one."

*putter-on*

A pretender, a hypocrite, a phony-acting person.

*put that in one's pipe and smoke it*

To consider thoroughly, to deliberate. To accept without argument.

*put the bee on*

To point out, to accuse, put responsibility on. Also to ask for a loan. "The very first day we got acquainted he put the bee on me for twenty-five dollars."

*put the big pot in the little pot*

Overflowing hospitality.

*put the finger on*

To identify, to point out.

*put the mouth on*

To curse, to damn.

*put the saddle on the wrong horse*

To come to the wrong conclusion, to trust in the wrong person.

*put the wind up*

Create fear.

*put the wood to*

To put the hickory to, to trash, whip, punish.

*put through the mill*

To be given a hard time, a hard course of sprouts, a tough titty to suck.

*put to bed with a pick and shovel*

Buried.

*put (out) to grass*

Retired, put on one's own responsibility.

*hard put to it*

In difficult circumstances.

*putty*

A weak-willed person. "Poor Luther, he's just putty in that woman's hands."

*put up*

To preserve foods by canning. "I put up forty quarts of snap beans this summer."

*put up at*

To stop over, to have quarters. "The preacher's putting up at our house."

*put-up job*

A prearranged agreement, usually a planned deception.

*put up or shut up*

Act or quit talking about it.

*put your money where your mouth is*

Be willing to back up loud opinion with work or contribution.

*pyeart*

Pert, well, lively.

*pyeart as a cricket**pyearten up*

To be reinvigorated. "Take a dram of this liquor, it will pyearten you up."

*Pyramid*

A children's game in which they stand on top of one another til the last one is unable to mount higher.

*pyxie plant (moss)*

A rare and shy little flower that is rarely found anywhere except in scattered places in the Carolina sandhills.

# Q

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*on the Q.T.*

On the quiet, secretly.

*quack*

A phony, an impostor.

*quack doctor*

A pseudo-medical impostor, sometimes called a root doctor, dust doctor, voodoo doctor, or whatnot, a hypocritical doctor cure-all.

One of the most flamboyant I ever met up with was named Dr. Nanzooka, or such was his name, he said. He was a big, heavy-set, swarthy man with fat hanging jowls and wore his grayish dank black hair down in a roll on his shoulders. He used to pay periodical visits to the different villages and towns in the Valley, usually using a local drugstore as his headquarters and filling the glass showcase windows with all sorts of flamboyant and highly advertised bottles and salves and different cures. He always took out good blazing advertisements in the local papers and usually went away with a good harvest of the farmers' dollars. I once wrote a one-act play about him, he impressed me so. One of his advertisement handbills which I have before me runs as follows:

"Dr. Nanzooka's extraordinary miraculous remedies. Money will be returned if cures are not effected according to contract. Dr. Nanzooka intends to remain in the city only a few days longer before he moves on to Fayetteville and Wilmington where his medicines are in great demand. So STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN, all who now suffer with incurable diseases for you *can* be cured. Dr. Nanzooka stands by his affidavit and honorable word to give immediate relief for cancers, boils, tetters, rheumatism, scurvy, scrofula, dropsy, piles, fistula, female obstructions, gravel, nervous dyspepsia, skin and blood disease, bone swelling, aches and pains generally, nightmares, neuralgia, kidney trouble and stricture. Also he is the sole agent



for Monsieur Lafacteur's true robanti syphilitique, an invaluable remedy for that dreaded disease or continental mal d'amour. Don't hesitate nor be ashamed — tell Dr. Nanzooka everything, MAN, WOMAN, and CHILD, for his life and science are dedicated to helping *you*. Buy today Dr. Nanzooka's Blenorragia Composition Salve, derived from a laboratory mixture of the balsam of Copivia, Tolu, Peru, Styrax, and Canada, and especially prepared for those disorders which are driven in to the blood stream and which unless stopped at once will convert the loveliest person into a mass of corruption. One dollar the full box. COME ONE, COME ALL, as was said by the Great Healer himself."

I asked Dr. McKeithan why in the world he and the North Carolina Medical Association didn't indict the quack and run him out of the country, for he and his kind were doing a world of damage. The doctor said they already had indicted him several times and in vain for no jury in the whole Valley was ever willing to find a true bill against him. Too many of them believed they had been helped by Dr. Nanzooka and "no doubt," said Dr. McKeithan, "they had. That is, they were helped as long as they believed in his cures and most of them believed."

While I was a student at Chapel Hill I visited Dr. Nanzooka one day in Durham, and there was a line of people in front of the drugstore waiting to go in, and each one would come out with a bottle of Nanzooka's remedy which he'd bought. Finally, I got on in and met the doctor in the back room. I told him about my arm, took off my coat, rolled up my sleeve and showed him the great scar that the Johns Hopkins doctors had left when they cut out the diseased bone, me being sorely beset years before by osteomyelitis. I told him my arm still pained me which was no lie — at the moment it wasn't. And then he said he had a cure for that. This was a common enough disease and he could assure me that if I would take this bottle of tonic I would immediately get relief. The price was \$1.50, and he brought out some salve too that, as I remember, was fifty cents for each little tin box. Then I told him that really what I wanted was to talk to him a bit. I asked him if he remembered ever getting a letter from a fellow named Green. Earlier I had got his address in New Jersey somewhere and had written him asking for an interview. He said that maybe his secretary had got it, but he had never got it. Then he grew suspicious.

"What do you want, young fellow, really, what are you after?"

"Just that," I said, "I want to talk with you. You really believe that this medicine is good?"

"Of course I believe it or I wouldn't be selling it. Are you trying to accuse me of being a crook?"

"No sir."

"Well, get out of here!" he shouted.

And his eyes gleamed at me so that I was glad to get out of there without

being attacked for my foolish question. So I went off and wrote my play.

I didn't make as much money out of that play as he made out of his medicine, of course, for I couldn't reach as big an audience. Later I heard he had built himself a fine estate out of his profits there in New Jersey. And later too I heard he had committed suicide.

*quagmar*

Quagmire.

as *quair* (queer) as Dick's hatband which went around nine times and wouldn't tie

*a quaker bargain*

An honest agreement or reliable arrangement.

*quaker-ladies*

The spring bluets. This modest and demure little flower is one of the earliest to appear in the spring. We children, when warm spring came in March, were always on the lookout for these quaker-ladies. Their arrival meant that winter was passed and we could go barefoot again. Another of its fitting names is innocence. Unlike most flowers in the Valley, it seems to have no medicinal virtues.

*Quakers*

The Religious Society of Friends founded in England about 1652 by George Fox. The term "Quaker" was originally disparaging in that the believers were said to tremble or quake violently with religious emotion. Fox preached that they should "tremble at the word of the Lord." The Quakers believe in peace and brotherhood and are strongly opposed to war. The sect was always small in the Valley, and their main following and congregations were in its upper reaches. With the coming of the Civil War their opposition to both it and slavery caused them much trouble and persecution and finally the removal of the majority of them to the middle west. Like the Moravians, the Quakers' influence in world affairs has always been strong though their numbers remain small — small by comparison, say, with the Catholics or Baptists. At the present (1981) there are less than 300,000 Quakers in the whole world, and becoming fewer every year.

For me the Quakers have one weakness. They do not care for music in their services.

*quality*

Aristocratic, high-class, blue-blooded. "You might know quality lives in a house as big as that."

*quality before quantity*

The *quality* of mercy is not strained.

*qualmish*

Nauseated.

*quanch*

Quench.

*quare (quair)*

Queer.

It takes two to make a *quarrel*.

*quart size*

Small. "He's easy to whup — he's only quart size."

*quartering time*

The time halfway between noon and 6 o'clock quitting time, usually around 3:00 p.m.

*quarter-session*

The old-timey custom of holding court every three months.

*queasy*

Uneasy, sickish.

*queen*

A pretty girl, often a spoiled one.

live like a *queen*

She is the *queen* of the hive.

*Queen Anne's lace*

Sometimes called bird's nest, wild carrot or devil's plague. A tremendously prolific wild plant that colors the hedges and whole fields white with its lacy, delicate blossoms in spring and summer. The root of the plant has been recommended as a poultice for ulcers and even for dropsy.

*queen bee*

A spoiled, egocentric female.

*Queenie*

A common name for a female dog.

*Queen of Scotland*

See "mail-order marriage."

*a queer*

A misfit, a homosexual.

*queer fish*

A misfit, same as a square.

*queer place*

The asylum.

*on queer street*

A condition of mental disturbance. "He can't talk sense, he's on queer street."

There are two sides to every *question*.

Ask me no *questions*

I'll tell you no lies.

Give me no peaches,

I'll bake you no pies.

*quick*

Quicksand. "My heifer got tangled up down in the quick, and I had a devil of a time getting her out of there."

Raw nerve, the heart, the most sensitive part. "When that tooth dentist's drill hit the quick, seemed like a sledge hammer had struck me 'side the head."

as *quick* as a cat

as *quick* as a flash

as *quick* as a shot

as *quick* as a squirrel

as *quick* as batting an eye

as *quick* as lightning

as *quick* as the devil

as *quick* as thought

*quicker* than a rabbit to his hole

*quicker* than you could say Jack Robinson

*quicker* than you could say scat

*quickmar*

Quagmire.

*quick one*

A quick drink of liquor, taken usually as a small drink, preparatory to hurrying off.

*quick on the trigger*

Unstable, fiery.

*a quicky (quickle)*

Same as a quick one.

A *quiet* tongue shows a wise head.

as *quiet* as a graveyard

as *quiet* as a mole

as *quiet* as a mouse

as *quiet* as an eel swimming in oil

as *quiet* as death

as *quiet* as the grave

as *quiet* as the inside of a coffin

as *quiet* as the inside of a grave

as *quiet* as the tomb

*on the quiet*

Secretly, hush-hush.

so *quiet* you could hear a pin drop

*quietus*

Death. "When I had that Yankee blinded with the tobacco juice I spet in his eye, then I give him the quietus with my musket butt."

*quile*

Coil.

*quile up*

Coil up, to get sullen, to become angry. "Don't set there all quiled up."

*quilting party*

A get together of neighborhood women for quilt-making. Although blankets are available in stores everywhere for bed covering, quilts are still used in the Valley, not only as such covering but often as show pieces of folk art. Quiltings would often last three or four days, and in that time as the women sewed they enjoyed every possible item of gossip and local news. When the quilting was done, the woman of the house would invite other neighbors, both men and women, in for a party.

One of my earliest remembrances is of my mother's quilting frames resting on four chairs and four or five women gathered around them with

their needles going and the patterned quilt gradually growing into its final and many-colored completion.

My sister Mary (Mrs. Alton Johnson of Lillington, N.C.) is an expert on quilts and has made and helped make many a one. I asked her to comment on the matter, and she writes me most enthusiastically as follows:

“No woman with an eye for color, a love of beauty, the familiar feel of a threaded needle in her hand, with a firm fitting thimble on her middle finger and a box or bag of multicolored scraps left over from the making of the family clothing should ever deny herself the satisfying joy of making a quilt! Quilt-making is as much a part of the beginning of America as cabin building and was an important means of fulfilling most women’s creative urge.

“Busy hands help ease the anxious spirit, they help long hours pass swiftly, and they add joy to the dreams and longings that perhaps may never come true. As the stalwart men raised the snug, windproof cabins, the equally stalwart wives and mothers wove the cloth that made the garments that kept the family clothed, and made the coverlets that kept them warm through the cold nights of winter. In quiltmaking, the cast-off, worn pieces of clothing that no longer served their purposes were often used, for material was not plentiful or even available to the early pioneers. Actually the story of the quilt is a record of the human family.

“The rich and the poor, the high and the lowly, the learned and unlearned, at some time in the development of our country did some form of putting a quilt together, maybe not for warmth always, sometimes for peace of mind and the need to be busy.

“Today in England at Hardwick Hall beautiful examples of quiltmaking can be seen, the work of Mary Stuart, Queen of the Scots, made while she was imprisoned there for so long a time. No accurate record, so far, has been found to tell us when and where the first quilt was assembled.

“We do have examples from some of the early civilizations, showing that spinning and weaving brought forth the first fabrics which evolved into covers out of necessity to meet a basic human need. The art of making stitches through three layers of material may have had its origin in India, Persia or Egypt. This, too, came about because of man’s need for warm covering in cold weather. Today quilt-making has become one of the arts, and the most intricate, lovely quilts never cover man, woman or child for the purpose of warmth; rather, they become wall hangings, bedspreads, draperies, museum pieces, real treasures to cherish and keep and to hand down to some lucky child, grandchild or even great-grandchild.

“I’d like to comment on some of the older patterns I remember seeing when I was a child growing up in a rural community where our home was:

“*North Carolina Lily*: This pattern has become a favorite of quilt-makers and is included in many of the quilt books being published today.

When we were children, we had a quilt in our home made by our mother when she was sixteen years old, using this pattern. The colors were faded, the material worn and ragged, but our Aunt copied it for us and today in our family this lovely quilt is treasured.

“Dark green, wine red and deep orange were the colors used, and months of searching for these true colors was necessary before we were ever able to assemble them. The result is a most exquisite example of fine needlework; the tiny stitches taken to put the design together, joining the blocks, the border, then the final three layers —top, filling and lining — and then quilting tiny stitches in a most intricate design. This is a treasure to be cherished, and I hope some day it will hang in a very special historical place.

“Also as a child I remember another quilt in our home, *The Double Irish Chain*: Made in an all-over pattern of 1 ½-inch rectangles of green and white, the design made a pattern of chains across the entire surface of the quilt and was very effective. This too has been copied and is owned by a member of our family.

“Below are listed other old and popular patterns. Any quilt book published today on this old art will have these, and many of the books will illustrate the pattern and one can make a tracing of it, true and accurate — *Monkey Wrench, Fox and the Geese, Grandmother's Flower Garden, Dresden Plate, Log Cabin, Le Moyne Star, Star of Bethlehem, Road to California*, and *Turkey Tracks*.

“Any or all of these, made up in colors of one's choosing (if the workmanship is good), could someday become a collector's item, eagerly sought by young couples who want to go back to the land to make their home and want to furnish this home in early American items. Even the very rich sometimes use quilts to decorate with.

“Several years ago in a well-known woman's magazine a very wealthy American woman's bedroom was pictured and quilts were the items used for emphasis. Bedspread, draperies, dressing table and a small round table were decorated with quilts. It was lovely too. Such a display of early American art was heartwarming.

“The word *quilt* reminds us that some of you dear readers may not know how one comes into being. A quilt is composed first of a top — pieced, appliqued, embroidered, even stenciled — and then a layer of cotton batting for filling and a lining — material, mostly cream colored. These three layers are placed in a frame, and small, even stitches go in and out to hold them together. Sometimes in the border, which is mostly solid color, a very fancy and lovely design is quilted. Often an original design by the maker of the quilt is used. Sometimes what is known as “quilting by the piece” is employed. This includes going around the individual patchwork.

“We have come a long way from early quilt-making. In this busy,

modernized age in which a lot of homemakers hold jobs outside the home, they simply do not have time to cut the pieces, put together all these pieces, and quilt what they have created. So the fabric manufacturers are copying old quilt patterns in all-over designs. With a machine quilting and binding a filler to the top, a homemaker can buy two widths in the desired length, seam them together, bind the edges and, lo and behold, she has a good reproduction of the motifs of the design to give her the feeling that she has had a part in 'quilting her quilt.' I've seen some very colorful and lovely designs in some of the fabric centers.

"Another method is to choose the pattern you want, select the colors that go with your decor, then order your quilt that has been cut out for you — every piece. What joy to start and never have to stop to cut more pieces! This, I think, is the next best method to doing it all 'from scratch.' "

Thanks, Mary!

One of our favorite Valley picnic songs was "Aunt Dinah's Quilting Party," written and composed nearly a hundred years ago by Joseph Fletcher and Francis Kyle.

"In the sky the bright stars glittered,  
On the bank the pale moon shone—  
And 'twas from Aunt Dinah's quilting party  
I was seeing Nellie home."

Refrain

"I was seeing Nellie home,  
I was seeing Nellie home,  
And 'twas from Aunt Dinah's quilting party  
I was seeing Nellie home.

"On my arm a soft hand rested,  
Rested light as ocean foam,  
And 'twas from Aunt Dinah's quilting party  
I was seeing Nellie home.

"On my lips a whisper trembled  
Trembled 'till it dared to come,  
And 'twas from Aunt Dinah's quilting party  
I was seeing Nellie home."

### *quinine*

The reliable medicine for malaria.

When I was a boy, malaria was widespread every summer in the Valley. I remember Dr. Joe McKay prescribed so much quinine for me that my head roared with the sound of a great wind much like the sound, I imagined, suffering Job heard when God spoke to him out of the whirlwind. But it



cured me. Malaria is now a thing of the past there.

*quirk*

An irrational strain or flaw, a deceitful trick.

*quirl*

Coil, curl.

*quits*

To stop, and, also, to make peace. “You’re both bloody as hogs now and you better call it quits.”

*quitter*

A failure, a coward.

*quitting time*

Sunset.

# R

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## *rabbit*

A timid person, a simpleton.

*Rabbit* up a gum stump,  
Possum in the hollow,  
Daddy spansks my ding-dong,  
Listen to me holler.

*Rabbit* up a gum stump,  
Possum in the hollow,  
Big gal down at Pappy's house,  
Fat as she can wallow.

(Recitation rhymes.)

## *rabbit ears*

The two adjustable antennae on an indoor TV set.

## *rabbit eggs*

There's a child's superstition that the rabbit brings eggs at Easter.

## *rabbit foot*

A good luck fetish, especially if it's the left hind leg of the graveyard rabbit. I remember hearing Will Rogers raise comment much to the point when a good luck rabbit's foot was shown him on one of his films. "That rabbit had *four* feet and look what happened to him."

## *rabbit tobacco*

The pearly everlasting. We boys used to gather it in the early fall and chew it and smoke it and walk about in braggadocio. Little big men. It was also used as a tea in the treatment of colds.

The *raccoon* has a ring tail,  
The possum's tail is bare.

The rabbit has no tail at all  
 But a little bunch of hair.  
 (A recitation rhyme.)

The *race* is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong.

*race prejudice*

A narrow and parochial attitude of one person or group toward another, especially that of the white toward the Negro and the Negro toward the white.

*racer*

The common blacksnake, usually spoken of as the black racer.

*rack*

Small summer clouds that usually form in the hot weather to the west, sometimes coagulating and building up to a great thunderstorm.

To walk in a hurry, or as the pacing of a horse is sometimes called.

*raddled*

Wrinkled, weather-worn.

*radish*

One of the earliest garden vegetables. Also a cheap timepiece. "What time does your radish say?"

*raft*

A great many, a multitude, as a raft of children.

*rag*

A flag, a handkerchief.

To tease, to backbite, to harrass.

That takes the *rag* off the bush.

*I lit a rag going up the road.*

Go in a hurry.

*rag bag*

A motley collection of odds and ends.

A *ragged* colt may make a good horse.

*ragtag*

The rabble, the poor whites, the peckerwoods.

*ragtag and bobtail*

Trifling people, same as poor whites.

*ragweed*

A prolific weed throughout the Valley and the curse to hay fever victims through the summer. The old people used to think that ragweed would cure warts. Maybe it would.

*rail fence*

The zigzag fence, often called snake fence or worm fence, made from split rails and in the old days common throughout the Valley. The farms, when I was a child, were fenced in and the hogs and cattle ran loose to eat acorns and graze in the reeds in the swamps. These rails were split usually from ten-foot lengths of longleaf pine logs, and the fence was from nine to ten rails high, up about as high as a man's shoulders. Bottom fence rails were chosen for their solid heart and long lasting against rot. Men used to measure their strength by bragging about how many rails they could split in a day. I remember hearing Clinton McNeill, a hard-working Negro, say once that he split a thousand rails on one day in his life.

*Railroad Mills*

A popular strong snuff.

*railroad time*

The correct time, especially reliable time, absolute truth. "Boy, I'm running on railroad time."

Evening red and morning gray  
Sets the traveler on his way.  
Evening gray and morning red  
Brings down *rain* upon his head.

*Rain* before seven, fair by eleven.

*Rain*, come wet me.  
Sun, come dry me.  
Stand back, white man,  
Don't come nigh me.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

*Rain* falling while the sun shines forecasts *rain* again the next day. It also means the devil is beating his wife.

*Rain*, rain, go away.  
Little Tommie wants to play.  
Wait and come another day.  
*Rain*, rain, go away.  
(A wish rhyme. We children used to substitute our own names the while, with noses against the windowpanes, we chanted our rhyme.)

The *rain* doesn't know broadcloth from jeans.

If distant sounds are heard very clearly, it means *rain* is coming.

More *rain*, more rest,  
All fair weather's not the best.

He sendeth *rain* on the just and on the unjust.

He receives as *rain* that which he gives back as mist.

A small *rain* will lay a great dust.

### *rainbow*

A sign of God's friendship to man, also a weather sign.

*Rainbow* in the morning  
Sailors take warning.  
Rainbow at night  
Sailors' delight.

At the end of the *rainbow* you will find a pot of gold.

### *rain cats and dogs*

A heavy downpour.

### *rain check*

A temporarily delayed invitation. "I can't come over tonight to see what you've done in redecorating the library, but may I have a rain check?"

### *rain crow* (the yellow-billed cuckoo)

The calling of the rain crow foretells the coming of rain.

One *raindrop*  
Can't make a crop.  
(Weather prophecy.)

The calling of the *rain frog* means rain.

### *rain or shine*

Without fail, certain. "I'll be there Monday morning, rain or shine."

It never *rains* but it pours.

### *rain seeds*

Mottled clouds. Little racks in the sky, usually dark ones that denote the coming of thickening clouds loaded with rain.

### *rainy day*

A time of need, hard times, that far-off time that haunts people with apprehension. "Be sure to save up something for a rainy day."

*A rainy today* means a sunny tomorrow.

*A rainy wedding day* is a sign that the marriage will be unhappy.

“But from this earth, this grave, this dust,  
My Lord shall *raise* me up, I trust.”

(This is often quoted from Sir Walter Raleigh’s poem to  
give hope.)

*raise Cain*

To stir up trouble.

*raised*

Reared. “I raised my boys right and that’s why they are all such a success  
today.”

*raised on prunes and proverbs*

Said of a fastidious, prissy or pious person.

*raise one’s bristles*

To be irritated or to respond angrily.

*raise sand*

Create a fuss, a disturbance.

*raise the roof*

To cut up, raise a disturbance, complain loudly.

*raising*

Training, upbringing. “The trouble with that fellow is he had no raising.”

*rake*

Poor, scrawny person.

*rake and scrape*

To be extremely saving, to work hard, to watch the pennies. “I rake and  
scrape to make a living and there you go wasting every dollar you got.”

Many bring *rakes* but few bring shovels.

*to rake straw*

To rake up pine needles, to do a distasteful job, waste one’s time.

*rake up*

To gather gossip, to search for scandal or past errors. “She’s always raking  
up that old story about Linda and the peddler.”

*ram*

An over-sexed male.

*a rambler*

A wandering, irresponsible fellow with sexual intent.

*rambunctious*

Unruly, high-spirited. "She was a rambunctious widow, raring to go."

*ramps*

Wild onions.

*rampageous*

High-spirited, a cutup.

*ramrod*

To drive a thing through roughshod, to force one to action. "He ramrodded the motion through."

like he had a *ramrod* down his back

*ramption*

A mess, also a large crowd. "There was a ramption of people at the funeral."

*ramsack*

Ransack.

*randy*

A boisterous party, a shindig.

*running range*

Gonorrhea.

*rank*

Of a high odor, especially of a rutting boar or ram. "That was the rankest billygoat I've ever been around."

*rank and file*

The common people, the ordinary folks.

*rap*

To scold, to spank. "Carter is rapping all of us now."

*rape*

The great Southern bugaboo for which many an innocent Negro has been lynched or died in the electric chair or gas chamber. Just recently a Negro, due to the hysterical testimony of the rapee, was condemned to death and later, commuted to life imprisonment, was found to be absolutely innocent. But North Carolina, so far as I know, has done nothing more than to pardon the Negro and say, as Jesse Oxendine said to the girl he had made pregnant, "Excuse me."

Also a vegetable.

*rape artist*

A term applied by fellow criminals to one in the penitentiary serving time for this crime.

*rapid*

Fast growing, bounteous. Also angry, fiercely antagonistic, ill-humored. "That sow's mighty rapid since she had pigs — better watch out."

*rap jacket*

Sometimes spelled "wrap." A contest in physical endurance indulged in by boys. I remember how at school we used to tear off and see who could take the worst beating. The opponents would take hands and then with a heavy switch or even short stick start belaboring each other. No beating in the face or on the head was allowed, but the rest of the body was fair game. I have been beaten almost black and blue before I called quits, especially if a certain yellow-haired little girl was looking on. I would almost die before I would surrender and call "Calf rope!"

*rap on one's ding-dong*

To be beaten or to beat on the rear, spank.

*rare (or rair) and pitch*

To cut up, to give way to anger, to quarrel violently.

*r'aring drunk*

Very drunk indeed.

*rash*

Thrash.

*raspberry*

A derisive sound made by protruding the tongue between the lips and exploding a sudden rush of air.

*ra't*

Right.

*to rat*

To betray, to be a stool pigeon, a traitor.

*rat*

The stuffing or pad used by women in the early part of the century to roach up their hair a la Madame Pompadour, and for a few years the height of fashion.



*ratchere*

Right here.

I'd *rather* be a dog and bay at the moon.

I'd *rather* be right than president.

*Rats!*

A mild exclamation.

*Rats* desert a sinking ship.

*rat-tailed*

Bedraggled, down and out, said of an animal with little hair on its tail.

*rattle*

To confuse, to embarrass. "I could've spelled that word if I hadn't got rattled."

*rattlebox weed*

The common wild pea. It is supposed to be poisonous to horses. We children used to pluck the dry pods and shake them close to our ears and listen with delight at the little seeds rattling within.

An empty cart body *rattles* most.

*rattlesnake plantain*

This pretty tufted, white, vein-leaved plant appears in all parts of the Valley. It has been reputed to be a cure for hydrophobia and snakebite. Legend tells that the Indians had such faith in its virtues that they were not afraid of snakebites at all and, when bitten, would apply these leaves to the wound and soon go on as if nothing had happened.

*rattlesnake root*

A perennial leafy composite plant. It provided a bitter tonic good for dysentery. Also, it was reputed to be an antidote for insect and snake bites.

*rattletrap*

A rickety buggy or wagon. "'Take your rattletrap and clear out,' said the professor to the Negro with his hat in his hand."

*rattleweed*

Same as wild pea or rattlebox weed. Tea made from this and fed to a sick cow was supposed to restore her appetite.

*ratty*

Tattered, moth-eaten, bedraggled.

Don't wait to be fed by the *ravens*.

*in the raw*

Naked, in the nude.

*Rawhead-and-bloody-bones*

A fabled monster, stories of which were and still are used in the Valley to frighten children. A common warning was and is — “Rawhead-and-bloody-bones will get you if you don’t behave.”

*rawhide*

A whip, also to whip. “If that old devil keeps fooling with me, I’m going to rawhide him good.” To haze, to ride, to ridicule.

*the razoo*

The bird, the raspberry, a term of derision.

*razorback*

A bony sharp-backed hog, usually “forest fattened.”

*razz*

To mock.

*razzle-dazzle*

Fancy and astonishing doings.

A man’s *reach* should exceed his grasp, or what’s a heaven for.

Out of *reach*, out of harm.

*read after*

To read. “I’ve been reading after Joe Daniels for fifty years, and I still like him.”

*Reading* maketh a full man, conversation a ready man and writing an exact man.

*read out of the meeting*

To dismiss, to turn away from the church, to deny.

*read the riot act*

To lay down the law.

*Ready* money is *ready* medicine.

*for real*

For sure, certain.

*realize*

To recognize. “Come closer, chile, see kin I realize you.”

*real McCoy*

A trustworthy matter, a tried and true thing.

*ream*

To clean out, to completely outdo, to cheat. "I got in that card game, and, man, did they ream me!"

They have sown the wind and shall *reap* the whirlwind.

He who would *reap* well must sow well.

You will *reap* what you sow.

There's neither rhyme nor *reason* in it.

*in reason*

Reasonable.

He *rebuked* the winds and the sea and there was a great calm.

*reckon*

To suppose, to believe. "I reckon I know how to act."

*red* as a beet

*red* as a cherry

*red* as a gander's foot

*red* as a lobster

*red* as a rose

*red* as a ruby

*red* as fire

*in the red*

To be operating at a loss.

*red birch*

The birch common in the Valley as contrasted with the white birch which is better suited to cold climates. The red birch grows along the river banks and creek banks and used to be used widely in making furniture, outdoor seats and tables. I remember as a boy how I admired this sort of furniture, and several times my brother and I went down to the old overgrown Sexton millpond place and cut red birch saplings and built some of this furniture for outdoor seats. Later it all rotted away and we lost interest in it.

*redbud tree*

Also called the Judas tree. It seems there are many kinds of trees on which poor Judas hanged himself, but this particular one is the only one I know that has his name. It is a beautiful decorative tree and in the early spring it is one of the first to put out its shower of rosy blooms. A tea made from

the bark of this tree is supposed to be good for kidney trouble, especially kidney trouble in children. Also it is recommended for grownups' obstructions in the liver and the spleen.

*red bug*

A devilish and almost infinitesimal pest known as the "chigger." Anyone wandering in the Southern woods in the hot July and August days had better anoint himself well beforehand with some sort of protection. Otherwise he will for the next several days be scratching himself and uttering ungodly oaths and damnation on this little curse.

*a red cent*

A term of emphasis. "It didn't cost me one red cent."

*Red Coon*

A brand of chewing tobacco.

*reddish*

Radish.

*red dog*

The ganging up on a single person or player by the opposition.

*red ear of corn*

A red ear of corn found in a cornshucking entitles the finder to an extra dram of liquor in moonshining sections and a kiss from a girl there and elsewhere. See "cornshucking."

*red-eye*

Especially fiery corn liquor which gets its name from the fact that it turns the eyes of the drinker red.

*redeye gravy*

Gravy that results from the frying of country ham meat, especially meat that is well-cured. How we children used to love to soak our biscuits in it!

*red-handed*

In the overt act of committing a crime. "He was caught red-handed."

*redheaded*

High-tempered.

*redheaded stepchild*

The obstreperous one, the difficult one of the family, an unpopular person.

*red-hot*

Over-sexed. "He got in with one of these red-hot mommas one night, and he didn't walk straight for a month."

*red-hot poker*

A flamboyant garden flower.

*red-letter day*

A memorable or lucky day. For hundreds of years the church had the custom of printing in red letters the holy days or church days, and so any red-letter day is a day to be remembered.

*red-light district*

Bawdy house district.

*red-neck*

Peckerwood, an ignorant farmer class in the South.

*red oak*

A common tree in the Valley. The bark from this tree is good for all sorts of troubles and diseases. We used to put the bark in the watering troughs for the chickens. If they drank the water, it was supposed to make them lay more eggs. I myself have worn poultices made from meal and red oak bark water on an aching osteomyelitis arm. My father also used to keep red oak bark strips in his hog troughs to help keep off the cholera.

*red pepper*

Any fiery person or doings. Also there was a belief that by blowing red pepper into a pregnant woman's nostrils the baby would be helped toward coming.

*like a red rag to a bull*

Infuriating, insulting.

*Red Shirts*

A rowdy political organization.

In the last years of the 1890's there was an organization known as the Red Shirts. They were not of the Ku Klux Klan, though their insistence on white supremacy was the same as the Klan's. They wore red shirts and rode horseback. Their purpose was mainly "to put the Negro back in his place." They were especially strong in the lower part of the Valley, their main headquarters being in Wilmington. In doing research on racial injustice many years ago I came across an account of a Negro member of the Populist Party who started a newspaper in Wilmington. The Red Shirts raided his "plant," took his printing press and, as I remember, threw it into the Cape Fear River and drove him out of town. I was so touched by the account that it was one of the reasons I started writing a long play on the subject. I changed the editor to a schoolteacher. The play was later produced in New York and was awarded a prize by the sympathetic Northerners. See also "Populism."

*red shoes*

Tan shoes. It used to be the custom when a boy wanted to buy a pair of tan shoes, he would say to the storekeeper, "I want to get me a pair of red shoes."

*reel*

A lively folk dance, such as Virginia Reel. Also a bobbin or part of a spinning wheel.

I *regret* I have but one life to give for my country.

*regular*

A fine character, a good companion, socially approved. "He's a regular guy, that fellow."

as *regular* as a clock

as *regular* as clockwork

Keep a tight *rein* if you'd drive straight.

*reincarnation*

The reappearance of the soul of the dead in another human or animal form and sparingly believed in here and there in the Valley, along with its concomitant doctrine of Karma. If one lives a moral life in this world, he is likely to be reborn in a high stage, so the theory holds. If he lives a sinful life, he will be reborn in a lower stage.

*Rejoice* and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven.

For this *relief* much thanks.

*religion*

The relation of man to the infinite, his consciousness of some outside power, usually absolute, omnipotent and beneficent which has control of him and to which he owes obedience and worship. This religious feeling or attitude, of course, is of all kinds, qualities, shapes and sizes, ranging from the most orgiastic and sexual to the highest type of attitude such as Albert Einstein's cosmic religion. One of the curses in the Valley for generations had been the narrow-minded, adamant, irrational and condemnatory orthodoxy — the belief in the Bible as holy "word for word and from led to led."

*religious jerks*

Same as holy dance. An orgiastic emotional condition often brought on and indulged in by excessive preachings and hollerings and wild word visions spilling hot and precipitately from the preachers' mouths.

The *remedy* is as bad as the disease.

as well to die with the disease as with the *remedy*

There is no *remedy* for ruined character.

There is no *remedy* in death.

*Remember* Lot's wife.

*Remember* now thy creator in the days of thy youth.

*Remember* the ant and the grasshopper.

*Remember* the sabbath to keep it holy.

*remind*

To resemble. "You remind me of your dad."

Three *removes* (moves) are as bad as a fire.

*rench*

Rinse, to put through a final washing. "Rench the clothes and then hang them on the line."

*rend*

Process, render. "I can't get off Saturday, I've got to rend my lard."

*Render* unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

*Repent* ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

It's never too late to *repent*.

Except ye *repent*, ye shall likewise perish.

Deathbed *repentance* is no *repentance*.

I've not come to call the righteous but sinners to *repentance*.

*reputation*

Of good character, good repute.

Better to go hungry than to be without a *reputation*.

One who loses his *reputation* has lost his most precious possession.

*"Rescue the Perishing"*

Another Valley standby hymn. Many a scaly and case-hardened sinner has been brought to repentance through its marching melody and mellow barbershop harmony, along with its message of sympathy and love.

"Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,  
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;  
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,

Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save."

Refrain

"Rescue the perishing, care for the dying;  
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.

"Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,  
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;  
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,  
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.

"Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,  
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save."

*resk*

Risk.

*rest*

The remainder, the last. "Eat the rest of your mush, son."

The *rest* is silence.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*.

There the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at *rest*.

I am the *resurrection* and the life.

*"Reuben and Rachel"*

A comic domestic song, a sort of dialogue between husband and wife which was once very popular in the Valley. As I remember it, it began like this — the man doing the speaking first—

"Rachel, Rachel, I've been thinking  
What a fine world this would be  
If the women were transported  
Far beyond the western sea."

And then Rachel comes back at him and answers—

"Reuben, Reuben," et cetera.

*Revenge* is sweet.

*revved up*

Keyed up.

*Reynolds Sun-Cured*

A brand of chewing tobacco.



*rheumatism*

In the old days all aches and pains were ascribed to rheumatism, and there were hundreds and hundreds of cures offered for it. I remember one of the most popular in the patent medicine brands was St. Jacob's Oil. And then, of course, there were multitudinous herb, weed, flower, shrub, and tree cures. X-ray made it possible to discover other causes and treatments. Arthritis has now become a more popular term.

*rheumatism cure*

Lie for a good while on a grave.

*rheumatism weed*

Same as Indian hemp.

*rhubarb*

An egregious error, a hassle, a hot useless argument.

Neither *rhyme* nor reason in it.

*rib*

A wife. "Ask my old rib there." Also to tease.

*Rice* thrown on a bride and groom brings the good luck of fertility.

*ricebird*

The cedar waxwing. In the Valley they were never called waxwings, but always ricebirds. They often were a curse in eating the early spring grains.

as *rich* as a king

as *rich* as Croesus

as *rich* as dirt

as *rich* as mud

The *rich* have many friends.

It's better to be born lucky than *rich*.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a *rich* man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

*rich as sin*

Exceedingly rich. "I made my garden rich as sin with chicken manure."

*Rich man, poor man*, beggar man, thief,  
 Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief.  
 (A divination rhyme.)

We used to have fun counting the buttons on a person's coat or dress, calling

them off one by one to fit the words. If the count came out "beggar man" or "thief," gales of laughter resulted.

*rick (rack)*

To pile up, usually crosswise, as rick (rack) up lumber.

*rid*

To clean. "Old Miss Kate and Mag Howington could rid the chitlins fast as we could get 'em to 'em." A little switch was inserted in the long length of the hog entrails, and then the entrail was turned wrong side out, washed off and then was ready for cooking. Later they were taken from the pot, cut up in small pieces and served as a Southern delicacy known as chitlins.

*riddle*

A sieve, a sifter.

*Riddle* me no *riddles*.

*ride*

To copulate. "Casey said just before he died, 'They's two more women that I want to ride.' "

To tease, to berate, to scold.

*Ride* a cock horse  
To Banbury Cross  
To see a fine lady  
Upon a white horse.  
Rings on her fingers  
And bells on her toes,  
She shall have music  
Wherever she goes.

(A baby foot-riding rhyme.)

This is the way the ladies *ride*—(three times)—  
Pace, pace, pace.

This is the way the gentlemen *ride*—  
Trot, trot, trot.

This is the way the farmers *ride*  
Hobbledehoy, hobbledehoy,  
Hobbledehoy and a bump!  
(Here the baby or child is let down with a bump.)  
(A baby foot-riding rhyme.)

*ride herd on*

To take care of, to control, look after, to baby-sit.

*ride high*

To show off, to be on the pinnacle of success.

*ride on a rail*

To disgrace one, to drum one out of town.

*to take for a ride*

To carry a person off to kill him. Also to deceive or cheat.

*rides* easy as a rocking chair*ride the bushes*

To flee, to run away fast. "When them yellow jackets zoomed up out of the ground, I rid the bushes going away from there."

*ride the rail*

To move in a hurry, same as burn the wind, or ride the bushes.

*riding*

Having success, to be getting along well. "That fellow's riding, yea, man, riding." Same as riding high.

*riding academy*

A whorehouse. There used to be a riding academy on the right, just north of Morrisville where a lot of the UNC students would go for "rides," so I was told. It has been torn down.

*riffle*

Ripple.

*riffraff*

Tom, Dick and Harry, the mob, the common people.

*rigamaragus*

All topsy-turvy, helter-skelter.

*right*

Very. "I'm right mad at you."

Absolutely, singly, used for emphasis. "I was right by myself when he hit me."

*right* as rain*right* as trivet

I'd rather be *right* than be president.

Be sure you are *right*, then go ahead.

*right down*

Used for emphasis. "It made me right down mad to hear him talk like that."

*Righteous* are thy ways.

The *righteous* shall flourish.

The *righteous* shall inherit the land.

Judgments are *righteous*.

In the house of the *righteous* is much treasure.

Be not *righteous* over much.

The mouth of the *righteous* speaketh wisdom.

*Righteousness* exalteth a nation.

*right-hand man*

A dependable person, a trusted one.

*right much*

Very much, used for emphasis. "Aunt Sarah is right much better, I hear."

*right off the bat*

Quickly, at once, unthoughtedly.

*right smart*

Much, a considerable amount. "We had a right smart turnout at the Legion meeting last night."

*riled (roiled)*

Stirred up, made angry, rubbed the wrong way.

*rinctum-do*

A breakdown, a loud party, a celebration.

*Ring* out the old, *ring* in the new.

*ring-around*

A tetter, a breaking out. There are all sorts of cures for this. One I remember was to rub the ring-around with the juice of a green walnut hull.

*ring around the moon*

A weather omen. This means that rain is coming soon. We children used to be told that if there were any stars in the ring, the number of stars would denote the number of days before the rain or changed weather would come.

*Ring Around the Rosie*

A children's game. The players form a circle holding one another's hands

as they march around a child, or "It," in the center, singing—

"Ring around the Rosie,  
Pocket full of posies,  
One, two, three - squat!"

The last child to squat or stoop then takes the place of "Rosie" or "It" in the circle. We used to sometimes sing it —

"Ring around the Rosies,  
Pocket full of posies,  
Green grass, yellow grass,  
All fall down."

*ringer*

A horseshoe that rings or hugs around the pin in the game of horseshoes, also an athletic spy.

*ring leader*

The principal leader, the boss, usually used derogatively.

*ring-tailed*

An outlandish person or thing, often as a "ring-tailed snorter." A term of disparagement.

*ring-tailed roarer*

A brawler, a loud-mouthed braggart.

*ring the bell*

Hit the mark, succeed well, bring one's purpose to a conclusion.

*ringworm*

Same as ring-around.

*rinky-dinky*

Puerile, childish, dull. "My freshman English course at Duke is rinky-dinky, and I'm bored to death."

*riot*

A whale of a gathering, a turmoiling happy time. "Mrs. Johnson's party was a riot."

*rip*

A reprobate, usually as "old rip."

*a rip*

A whore.

*rip and tear*

To act boisterously. Also a fighting fracas.

Soon *ripe*, soon rotten.

The *ripest* fruit falls first.

*rip-off*

A cheating procedure. "A lot of this burial insurance sold to Negroes is just a rip-off."

*rip-tail snorter*

A terrific happening, person or thing. "Zack Broadhuss was a rip-tail snorter." "That storm was a rip-tail snorter."

*rise*

A flood or freshet. "There's such a rise in the river the flat won't run."

*Rise*, take up thy bed and walk.

Men may *rise* on stepping stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

The higher the *rise* the greater the fall.

*rise and shine*

To get up in a hurry and move energetically to begin the day's work.

He is not here for He is *risen*.

*a rising*

A boil, a carbuncle.

*ritzy*

Highfalutin, fashionable, putting on airs.

*Do as they do over on the river.*

A sort of living up to the Joneses.

Let us pass over the *river* and rest under the shade of the tree.

A noisy *river* never drowned nobody.

All the *rivers* run into the sea and yet the sea is not full.

*riz*

Rose, past tense of rise.

*roach*

To mound up, as to roach up a grave.

*roaches of the liver*

Cirrhosis of the liver, a drying-up and hardening of that organ, usually attributed to continued overuse of alcohol.

Nello, who shined shoes in the local barbershop and was a long-time friend of mine, was afflicted with this trouble. One day when I went to the shop, he was absent, as he often was. To my inquiry the barber gave quite a voluble and answering discourse.

"What'll it be, Doc?" he first asked, as I stopped by the clothes rack. He gave his barber cloth a few wide popping flaps in the air and held it waiting. I took off my coat, loosened my tie and shirt collar and sat down in the waiting, restful chair.

"A shave and a face massage," I said.

"Right, right as rain," he said. "Make you feel better."

He lowered the chair flat back and spread the cloth over me and began tucking it in and around my neck. I lay looking up at the heavy fluorescent light fixture hanging directly and threateningly above. Heavy, yes! He began stropping his razor.

"A shine too," I said.

"Hey, boy! A shine over here!" he called. He snapped on the lather mixer. I lay relaxed. It whirred. I closed my eyes. Already I felt better. Now he slip-slopped creamy soap foam on my cheeks and chin. He began to rub pressingly.

Outside on the sidewalk the tapping of women's heels went along. I heard it, visualized a bit, and caught the passing mixture of young people's voices — Easter shoppers, elated, expectant, generous. Christ is risen — the fish are biting!

Now came hot towels and more soap foam. This was good. A bit of more razor-stropping. And then the shaving began. Suddenly a strong hand lifted my foot and put it up on the shine last. I looked out on the incline to speak to Nello as usual, but there sat a stranger, an intense square-cut wide-nostriled young mulatto face, not Nello at all with his wild razor scars and his shifting restless yellow-balled eyes — Nello, friend to me and my shoes these long times gone.

"You've got a new man," I finally said to the barber.

"Yeah, yeah, Doc, we have."

"How's Nello getting along?" I asked.

He shaved on a while and the strong new hands applied polish on my shoes. I was being well looked after, top and bottom. Good.

"Yes," the barber said presently, and I felt him wipe the razor across the swatch of paper-roll across my breast. "His name's Early. Say, Early, fix 'fessor's shoes up right, boy. Fix 'em up." He spoke with good and soul-breezy authority.

He concentrated on his job. The left side of the face now that the right was done, and then the upper lip, carefully — tiny, furtive scrapings and on into the corners of the mouth. Next under the jowls and the chin, and then slip and up under the lower lip. Again the razor was wiped.

“How’s Nello getting on now?” I asked, breathing a bit more freely. No answer. “Turn Doctor’s pants up, boy, or you’ll get that blacking on ’em,” the barber said to Early.

“Yessuh,” said Early quickly. I felt him fumble about my ankle. Next he was finishing with the paste on this shoe and was polishing away, now and then trying to make his shine cloth pop, but without success. Not the way Nello could do it. Nello could make the train sound of old Ninety-seven coming around the bend — whoo-who, he could really play his railroad tune with that cloth.

Then a dampening soft palm-smearing with warm water on my face and a quick second going-over with the razor. Next, three hot towels in succession and the massaging cream — long squeezing palm strokes, half-brutal, half-caressing.

“You been working hard, Doc?” the barber said.

“Oh, so-so.”

“Writing more plays?” And again his laugh shattered the air. I wondered some — but not much.

“Well, trying, I guess,” I mumbled.

“Soon be time to open up your outdoor dramas again, won’t it?”

“Yeah. Time goes by in a hurry.”

“Don’t it? The older you get the faster it goes. Getting so now seem like I can hear the Sunday papers falling in front of my gate one ’pon top of the other.” Again he laughed and I could feel him looking about the barbershop to his fellows with his merry bright blue eyes.

“Yes, and don’t the birthdays come fast?”

Rub, rub, rub. “They do.” Silence — rub, rub. “Yeh, Nello won’t be with us any more,” he finally spoke up, quietly, coldly even, without interest, a simple reply to a question remembered.

“Too bad,” I said, thinking of the long absences in the past when Nello was away on the chaingang serving time for drunkenness, for fighting. Poor Nello!

“I guess you finally got wore out with him.” I said.

The barber pushed down and roiled up the drying cream, cleaning out the dirty and oily pores.

“This is a new kind of cream — really does the work,” he said.

“Up—oom—no doubt,” I mumbled.

“He was good at shining shoes what time he was sober — Nello, I mean. That’s why we kept him on,” he said.

“Yeah, he was a good sort of fellow all the same.”

“He was and he wasn’t. Never could tell what was on his mind. Never talked much.”

“Not much,” I said. “I noticed that.”

And I lay remembering the hard crisp calls of the different barbers in



the shop — “Hey, boy, shine ’em up here. Brush here, boy. Make it snappy. Can’t wait all day” — these calls and orders of times past. And I could see Nello’s flying hands, his quick movements, his extended palm for the coin, the whiskbroom under his arm, his bows, his mask-like scarred face, the yellow-balled eyes — the deep brown pupils that looked at you and didn’t look at you — the deep brown pupils smoky and, yes, sightless in their seeing — or what did they see?

“He was mean when he got full of that old wine,” said the barber, now brushing away the dirty crumbs of cream from my face.

“Is he back on the roads again?”

“He may be for all I know,” and he laughed his shattering laugh once more. “Yeh, if they’ve got a chaingang in yonder world.”

A tremor went through me. “Why? What’s happened to Nello?”

The easing hot towel again now and then another.

“Too hot?”

“Noo-unh.”

“Just right?”

“Uhm — yes.”

The towel was lifted now, and next began the slow, long, seductive rubbing, not rough now, not at all, but soothing, sweet, almost like a woman’s tender loving. But something — a worry. Nello — my bruised and lost and wordless friend. Nello.

“You ain’t been in lately,” the barber queried and announced half-accusingly.

“No, I’ve been staying in sort of close at home.”

“Working at your plays?”

“Some.”

“You hadn’t heard ’bout Nello? He conked out — croaked, I mean.”

“What?”

“Yeh, up and died last week.”

“Good gracious!” I half sat up as if that would help, then lay back again.

“Had it coming to him, I reckon,” the barber said.

“How you mean?”

“That old wine and stuff. Runs ’em crazy, burns up their liver. Want some witch hazel, ’Fessor?”

“Yes, oh yes. Anything.”

“Mighty good for the tender face. And you’re sort of tender down around your Adam’s apple.”

Next the stinging cool and scented lotion. “Been scraping yourself kind of close down there, ain’t you?”

“Yeah, but Nello—”

“Gone.”

“Goodness! He was a young fellow.”

“Brush here, boy,” called another barber down the line. Early laid my foot up finished and sprang away. Now came the cool dry final towel, smelling of the heat of the laundry, like the sheets my mother used to dry on chairs before the wood fire on rainy days long ago.

“It was roaches of the liver got him,” said my barber. “He was plumb et up with it. Didn’t know it either. Worked right up to the last. He come in here to work a-Wednesday morning and he was dead Thursday, the next day. Some of the fellows said to him, ‘Nello, you’re moving mighty slow today’ — that was Wednesday — ‘Nello, make it snappy,’ we would tell him. And old Nello would mumble something ’bout not feeling so good. ‘Reckon I ort to see a doctor,’ he said long about quitting time.”

“That old wine,” said Joe, the barber at the right.

“Roaches of the liver — yeh. My granddaddy went like that. The doctor said his liver was about the size of a trabball and hard as a hickory nut.”

“Yeh,” said my barber, “it’ll kill you — booze will. Powder, ’Fessor?”

“No — yes, powder, a little.”

Then the dab, dab, pat, pat of the end-folded towel. Sweet stuff. Mennen’s.

The barber slammed his foot on the chair pedal and swung me up sitting. His hands wriggled and dug into my scalp. “Your hair’s mighty dry, Doc. Some lanolin? Make you feel better.”

“All right.”

“Good for the scalp. Seems Nello got home and went to bed Wednesday. Then the doctor come — Doctor Abernathy it was. He examined him and saw he was already half-dead. ‘I got to get you to Memorial Hospital,’ he said. And he left him. Sure puts a shine on your hair, this sheep’s grease does.”

“Did they get him to the hospital?”

“Well, yes — the next day — Thursday.”

And all night Nello lying in his ragged bed, looking at what, thinking of what? He never would talk much. Now the barbers are stropping their razors, winking and jibing — Been with that old wine again, eh, Nello? Ninety days again. Now the bark of the convict boss, — Lift up that pick — heigh you — swing on it — roll that Georgia buggy, boy — tell the news — make your time — make it sweet and low.

“The next day Doc come, as I say,” said the barber. “Thursday morning. They go in to wake Nello and no waking.” Again I felt the brush, brush, the comb, comb, and brush, brush again. “Your hair is standing up in a sort of cowlick here, ’Fessor, where you been sleeping on it. I’ll get it down in a minute. He was already in a coma — lying there, his sister said, scarcely breathing at all. They started with him in the ambulance. Yeah, in a stooper he was and he was dead when they got to the ambulance entrance

at the hospital. Well, there you are, Doc."

The cloth was unpinned, a bit of air-hosing inside my collar followed, and I stepped from the chair. I tied my tie, and Early helped me on with my coat and brushed me industriously off. I paid my barber and I gave Early a little extra.

"Feel better, Doc?" said the barber as he crashed the cash register open.

"Yeah, better!" — I almost shouted the words, then I softened them down as I saw his eyes flare. "You've fixed me up fine."

"Come again, 'Fessor."

"Yeah. How long did Nello work here for you folks?" I asked.

"Oh, ten, fifteen years maybe — off and on," said the barber. "And all the time that old wine, that old booze business. We were mighty patient with Nello."

"I see," I said.

And going out, I let the door slam hard, I didn't mean to let it slam maybe. It just did.

And as I walked on I could hear my barber saying to his fellows, in my mind I could hear it. "What's the matter with 'Fessor? Seem like he went off kinder mad or sump'n — let the door slam like that."

"Can't tell about these writing fellows," said Joe the nearby barber.

"Next!" my barber called.

The *road* to hell is paved with good intentions.

You won't travel no good *road* if you cross a crooked stile to get to it.

It is a long *road* that has no turning.

The shortest *road* to the penny, longest *road* to the dime.

*road cart*

A two-wheeled light gig.

*road hog*

A driver who hogs the road and has no care for others' rights.

*road itch*

Wanderlust.

*Roanoke*

Indian wampum or shells used for money, therefore the name "Roanoke Island."

*roars* like a lion

*roasting ears* (*roas'n ears*)

The milky ears of corn just before they harden into ripeness, a special garden delicacy.

**Robbers**

A game. One or two children (robbers) hide along the path where the other children (travelers) have to pass. After the robber or robbers have hidden, the travelers come walking along saying—

“No robbers out today,  
No robbers out today.  
We are singing on our way  
For there’s no robbers out today.”

Suddenly the robber or robbers rush out and try to catch the rest. Those who are caught become robbers in their turn and try to catch others.

**all around Robin Hood’s barn**

This saying means to go a long ways around to get to the main point, like going around the elbow to get to your thumb.

A *robin’s song* is not pretty to the worm.

**rock**

A solid, reliable person.

To cover with rocks or crushed stone. “We’ve got one more mile of road to rock, and then we’re finished.”

**St. Peter’s Rock**

The Catholic church.

*Rockabye baby* in the treetop.  
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock.  
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall,  
And down comes cradle and baby and all.  
(A lullaby rhyme and song.)

**rock bottom**

The basic essential, the lowest price or place, the limit.

**rocker**

Common sense, sanity. “He’s off his rocker.”

*Rocking* an empty cradle will bring a new baby to fill it.

It is bad luck to rock an empty *rocking* chair.

**rocking chair man**

An easy-going person, an indolent person.

**rocking chair woman**

A spoiled, lazy, good-for-nothing female.

*“Rock of Ages”*

A favorite old hymn that has comforted countless thousands in the Valley with its enduring symbol of strength.

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
 Let me hide myself in Thee.  
 Let the water and the blood  
 From Thy wounded side which flowed  
 Be of sin the double cure,  
 Save from wrath and make me pure.”

“While I draw this fleeting breath,  
 When my eyestrings break in death,  
 When I rise to worlds unknown  
 And behold thee on Thy throne,  
 Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
 Let me hide myself in Thee.”

*rocks*

Money, coins.

*rock-skimming*

A rock-throwing-on-water contest. We boys also called this rock-skeeting. We'd take flat stones and throw them one at a time with all our might along the surface of the creek or pond. Sometimes one would be able to make his rock go skimming with four or five bounces and be declared the winner.

*rocky*

Rough, hard going. “How is it with you, Joe?” “Rocky, son, rocky.”

*Rocky Mountain canary*

A jackass.

*rod*

Gun, a pistol, also the penis.

Spare the *rod* and spoil the child.

Thy *rod* and thy staff they comfort me.

*roguish*

Wandering, obstreperous, undomesticated. “I’ve got a roguish cow, and no matter how high the lot fence is, she can sail over it, so I’ll just have to put a yoke and tongue on her.”

*roke*

Past tense of rake.

*Roley Holey*

A game. A number of players dig a sequence of little saucer-like holes in the ground in a row and the first player rolls a ball along and over these holes. The owner of that hole in which the ball stops grabs the ball and tries to hit one of the players as they run away. If he misses, he is charged with what is called "a pig." When a player gets three "pigs," he is stood up against a wall, such as the house, facing it, and each of the other players has a throw at him. This is called "nailing to the cross." After this the game resumes.

The ball we used was about the size of a small orange and made of thread from old raveled stockings wound and sewed tightly. It was punishing enough when it hit the captive "nailed to the cross," depending on the strength of the thrower.

*roll*

To tumble a woman, to copulate with her.

*rolled*

Robbed. "Last night I got rolled of fifty dollars."

*rolling*

To have plenty of, especially of money or property. "From the way that man gets a new Cadillac every year, he must be rolling."

*"Roll, Jordan, Roll"*

We children sang this old song a lot as we chopped in the fields. The rhythm and verses were very satisfactory for emphasizing our too-often lethargic strokes. We pronounced it "Jurdan."

"Roll, Jordan, roll,  
Roll, Jordan, roll,  
Wanter go to heaven when I die  
Just to hear old Jordan roll.

"Somebody's dead in the graveyard,  
Somebody's drowned in the sea,  
Wanter wake up in the morning  
And shout that jubilee!

"Roll, Jordan, roll," etc.

*rolling stock folks*

Migrant workers.

A *rolling stone* gathers no moss.

*roll your own*

To be on one's own, also descriptive of a handmade cigarette.

*roly-poly*

Fat.

*romancing around*

Loafing.

*Rome* was not built in a day.

When in *Rome*, do as *Rome* does.

When in *Rome*, do as the Romans do.

He that owns *Rome* must feed *Rome*.

*romp*

A wild, exuberant party.

*ront*

Ruined or ruint.

*roof cave in*

Disaster overtaking one.

*rook*

To cheat or fool. "I waited two hours, but my man rooked me."

There's plenty of *room* at the top.

*in room of*

In place of, instead of. "Let John work in room of Frank today."

*no room to cuss a cat*

No space at all.

*rooster*

A pert young lad, a cocky person.

A good *rooster* crows in any hen house.

*rooster fight*

A rough-and-tumble set-to between two boys.

There's a belief that the *roosters* crow at midnight on Christmas.

*rooster's egg*

An undersized or misshapen hen's egg.

*root*

The penis.

*root hog or die*

Work or starve.

Give a man enough *rope* and he'll hang himself.

*rope in*

To gather in, to trick.

*rope of sand*

A worthless argument or reason.

*ropes*

Ways, means of business. "He knows the ropes all right."

Every *rose* has its thorn.

looks like the last *rose* of summer

A *rose* to the living is more than sumptuous wreaths to the dead.

Gather ye *rosebuds* while ye may.

*rose-colored*

Romantic, over-idealistic.

*rosemary*

Also called garden rosemary, a popular and aromatic flower-garden plant. Tea from its leaves was often used as a stimulant and tonic. Housewives put sprays of it in closets and trunks to make the clothes sweet-scented. And who does not recall the piteous Ophelia in the play "Hamlet" where she comes in mad and handing out her flowers — saying —

"There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray,  
love, remember, and there is pansies, that's for  
thoughts."

*Roses* in youth, thorns in old age.

*Roses* on my shoulders,  
Slippers on my feet,  
I'm my mother's darling,  
Don't you think I'm sweet.

(A little child's recitation rhyme.)

Lie on *roses* when young and you'll lie on thorns when old.

*rot gut*

A sorry sort of moonshine liquor.

*rotten*

A sick or enfeebled condition.

as *rotten* as dirt



There is small choice in *rotten* apples.

Something's *rotten* in Denmark.

*Rotten Eggs*

A game. In playing this game each child locks his arms under his knees. Then two players try to lift him by his arms and try to shake them loose. If his arms give 'way, he is then "Rotten Eggs," their shouts proclaiming him so.

*rotten Saturday*

The day after Good Friday. This is supposed to be the worst of all days for planting a garden crop or any crop for that matter.

*rotten shame*

Great shame, same as a crying shame.

*rough-and-ready*

Unhewn, stalwart, unpolished. "He was a rough-and-ready man but honest to the core."

*rough-dry*

Clothes dried and awaiting ironing.

*rough feed*

Roughage, as opposed to hard grain feed, such as fodder, hay, wheat, straw and so on.

*roughhouse*

A noisy disturbance.

*roughneck*

A bully. A noisy, misbehaving person, one with no manners.

*rough on rats*

Any violent thing or rough action, harsh treatment, a difficult undertaking.

*rough row of stumps*

Difficult situation, etc.

as *round* as a dollar

as *round* as a drum

as *round* as a marble

as *round* as an orange

as *round* as the moon

*rounder*

A sort of bully, a rough good time Charlie.

*round-faced* like the moon

*round potatoes*

Irish potatoes as contrasted with long (sweet) potatoes.

*round robin*

Condemnation proceedings, a circle of gossipers busy tearing someone's character to tatters.

*roust*

To stir up, to wake, to arouse. "Better not roust up them hornets, boy."

Hoe your own *row*.

Let a man hoe his own *row* and keep it clean, too.

It's in the long *row* that a man's test comes.

It's a long *row* that has no turning.

*row of pins*

A phrase of comparison signifying something of no importance or value.  
"All that talk about behaving himself wasn't worth a row of pins."

*Row, row, row* your boat  
Merrily down the stream,  
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,  
Life is but a dream.

(A popular old round.)

*royal fern*

A widely diffused fern found on almost any damp place in the Valley. It is easy to transplant and many flower gardens now show it flourishing. Tea made from its root was supposed to be good for coughs and rheumatism.

There is no *royal road* to learning.

Who can find a virtuous woman, for her price is far above *rubies*.

*rub out*

To erase.

*rub the wrong way*

To irritate, to cross, to exacerbate.

*ruck*

Past tense of rake.

Rut.

*rucking*

Rocking, rattling. "My old wagon was rucking along."

*ruckus*

A fuss, a fight. There's a popular old Tin Pan Alley song that we used to sing in the Valley titled "Raise a Ruckus Tonight." Our male quartet used to go on many a moonlight foray, singing away and raising a ruckus with our preferred pieces, one of which was always—

"My old mistis promised me—  
 Raise a ruckus tonight—  
 When she died she'd set me free—  
 Raise a ruckus tonight."

Chorus

"Come along, oh children, come along,  
 While the moon shines bright.  
 We'll take a boat  
 And down the river float,  
 Gonna raise a ruckus tonight."

"If I could I surely would—  
 Raise a ruckus tonight—  
 Stand on the rock where Moses stood—  
 Raise a ruckus tonight."

Chorus repeat

*ructious*

Unruly.

*rue* (also called *herb of grace*)

An aromatic plant of popular medicinal use also by the Valley people in the old days. Rue tea was especially good for rheumatism and aching joints. Again we think of poor mad Ophelia's flower chant in the play "Hamlet"—  
 "There's fennel for you, and columbines. There's rue for you, and here's some for me. We may call it herb of grace o' Sundays."

*Rue* and thyme grow in the same garden.

*rue anemone*

A beautiful shy little flower of the early spring. Like most of its sisters, it too had its medicinal uses in the old days. It was both a purgative and a diuretic.

*ruellia*

The twin bluebell common in the dry woods throughout the Valley. So far as I know, it is an exception in that it has no medicinal value.

*ruff*

Roof. "Look up in the ruff of my mouth and you'll see that sore, Doctor."

*ruffled feathers*

A condition of angry irritation. "Son, you'd better much your sweetheart up — she's got her feathers all ruffled."

*"Rufus Rastus Johnson Brown"*

This was another popular song we young folks sang, especially as we worked in the fields and also sometimes on picnics. The melody was written by Harry Von Tilzer (1872-1946), who also wrote "A Bird in a Gilded Cage," "Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nelly," and other popular songs. Andrew B. Sterling wrote the words to Rufus. This old-time favorite, like others, is rarely sung in the Valley any more, but I still like to hum it to myself and remember its association with more youthful days, though no less hopeful and aspiring ones than now.

"Rufus Rastus Johnson Brown,  
What you gonna do when the rent rolls round?  
What you gonna say, what you gonna pay?  
You'll never have a bit of sense till judgment day.

"You know, I know, rent means dough,  
The landlord's going to put us out in the snow.  
Rufus Rastus Johnson Brown,  
What you gonna do when the rent rolls round?"

And so on.

*rug-riders*

Arabs, especially Iranians.

*ruinate*

To ruin, used somewhat jocularly.

*ruination*

Ruin.

*ruined*

Said of a woman who has borne a bastard baby. I don't know what term would fit those who have had half a dozen or more and are all on the government payrolls.

*ruint*

Ruined, often bankrupt.

*Rule* or ruin.

There's no *rule* without an exception.

He that will not be *ruled* by the rudder will be wrecked on the rock.

*rule the roost*

To boss or be head man.

*rum hound*

A confirmed drunkard.

*rump*

Posterior, buttocks.

The *rump* thrives faster than the forehead.

*run*

Supply, to be sufficient. "He's got enough corn this year to run him."

Go. "While you're in Lillington, run by Tugwell's and get me a bottle of liniment."

A flaw or the breaking of a stitch in any knitted apparel such as hose. "I've got to go back and change, I've got a run in my stocking."

The main part of a stream, the channel.

A small brook or branch of a stream.

A distilling of bootleg liquor.

One thing to *run* for your dinner and another for your life.

A good *run* is better than a bad stand.

*run-around*

A festered condition of the fingernail.

*to get the run-around*

To be trifled with, deceived, kept waiting on the anxious seat.

*run down*

To berate, malign, to spread scandal about a person. "He runs down his wife the worst in the world."

*run-down*

A list, a layout, an itemized account. "Give me the run-down on that and I'll tell you what I'll do."

Puny, sick, feeble. "I'm all run-down lately, and I've got to go to the store and get me some Peruna."

*run dry*

To quit giving milk, or to be dried up as a stream, or to cease creative work. "I'm afraid Wilbur's run dry — we don't get any more stories from him."

*to run into*

To meet. "I'm glad I run into you. I've got a mess to tell."

*run into money*

Expensive, high priced. "That wide flooring runs into money."

*run into the ground*

To wear out, to overdo, to beat an old bag of bones. "He's run his sanctification story plumb into the ground."

*run like a turkey*

To run fast.

*running*

In succession. "I've had the toothache three nights running."

What's the use of *running* if you're on the wrong road.

*running cedar*

A crawling cedar found in the deep rich damp woods and used plenteously for decoration at Christmastime.

*running fits*

A condition of sick dogs and sometimes applied jocularly to people who spout a great deal of nonsense talk.

*running mouth disease*

Over-loquacity.

*running range*

Gonorrhea.

*run off at the mouth*

To be garrulous, over-talkative.

*run of the house*

Freedom of the house, to have the free use of a place.

*run-of-the-mill*

Average, ordinary. "Well, I reckon he's pretty smart, but I would say he's just run-of-the-mill."

*run on*

To continue voluble talk. "She run on and on and you couldn't stop her."

*run one's mouth*

To be over-garrulous, to talk nonsense.

*run out of*

To use up, exhaust. "I'd let you have some gas but I've run out."

*run ragged*

Overloaded with work, fretted with too many duties, persecuted.

He that fights and *runs* away

Will live to fight another day.

A dog *runs* for his character and a hog *runs* for his life.

He that *runs* may read.

He *runs* with the hounds and holds with the hare.

*run scared*

To be apprehensive of failure. "Yes, I plan to announce for sheriff, but I'm pretty sure I'll have to run scared."

*runs* like a rabbit

*runs* like the devil

*runs out*

To end, to be finished, stopped. "Yessir, I've been working at the sawmill green end, but my job run out last week and I'm on the loose hunting for work."

*run to death*

Overworked.

*to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds*

Straddle both sides.

*run up and butt*

To be frustrated in an action. "All he could do was run up and butt, then back off and try it again!"

*'ruption (eruption)*

A fuss, a fight.

*ruptured*

Broken down, no 'count.

*ruptured duck*

A failure, a misfit, a weak and ineffectual person.

*Russellborough*

The perished home of Governor Tryon where the first armed resistance to the Stamp Act occurred in 1765. See an account of this in *Sprunt's Tales*.

*rust*

High activity, gaiety. Just the opposite of degeneration from lack of activity. "I'm going to cut a rust at that gal's house on Saturday night."

*rustle up*

To prepare, to find, to get ready in a hurry. "Rustle up some grub, will you?"

*rusty*

Out of practice, awkward, muscle-bound. "No, I can't play the fiddle. I'm just plumb rusty on it."

*rusty hairpin*

An item of good luck. If you find one, be sure to keep it. Some of the members of the U.N.C. baseball team a few years ago looked around to find rusty hairpins. They kept them in their pockets while playing and they won a lot of games, so they said.

*rusty nails*

Used for cures as well as fruit-bearing. Old Mis' McIntosh used to cure her children of malaria and thin blood by feeding them a tea concoction made from rusty nails, vinegar and spring water. She said it was good for the colic, too. There must have been something in it for she raised twelve brawny Scotch sons and daughters and most of them are still living. Then just recently when Arthur Caldwell and I were out hoeing around one of my tender fig bushes, I deplored the fact that they got killed down nearly every winter and I rarely got any figs from them. Up spoke Arthur and said, "Mr. Green, you'd have plenty figs if you'd do like my daddy did." "How did he do, Arthur?" "Well, sir, he would get a lot of old rusty nails and plough points and stuff like that and put them around the roots of his figs and he got figs and I mean figs. I remember one year he got fifty bushels of figs." "Fifty bushels?" "Yessir, and he hauled most of them to Durham. He had a whole row of figs and every time he found any old rusty nails or plough points or broken iron he'd put 'em at the root of his fig trees and they done good. Yessir, you do that and you'll have plenty of figs, Mr. Green."

*in a rut*

To be in a bind or in a psychological block or in a dull repetition of work.



*rutabaga*

A common garden vegetable. Juice from the boiled root was supposed to be good for fever.

*ruthers*

Rathers, preferences, same as druthers, but not drathers. "Why does he always get his ruthers and we don't?"

*rutty*

Sexually aroused.

*rye grass*

A popular grass for winter lawns. When I was a boy, I don't recall any single yard or lawn in the whole of our neighborhood that had any green grass in the winter. Most of the premises were kept swept clean. Now drive up and down the Valley and the farmers' yards are green with rye grass in the winter. Beauty and caring come more and more to the people.

# S

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The *sabbath* was made for man and not man for the *sabbath*.

Remember the *sabbath* day to keep it holy.

## *sack*

To fire, to dismiss. "My boss sacked me yesterday and you can know how I feel."

An old *sack* needs much patching.

It is hard for an empty *sack* to stand upright.

## *Sack Race*

A contest game in which the contestants insert themselves into sacks up to the waist and then try to run, hobbled as they are. A prize of sorts is usually given to the winner.

## *sad*

Deflated, flat, unleavened. "This is a sad cake, it did not rise at all."

## *Sad'dy*

Saturday.

## *saddle*

To load down, to overload. "His wife died and left him saddled with six young'uns."

## *sadiron*

A flat iron, pointed at one end and with an iron handle used for ironing the laundered items. My mother had to have a heavy cloth wrapped around the handle to protect her hands from burning. These irons were usually heated by being set upright on the hearth with the face toward the fire, and, thus, iron handles rather than wood were used in the old days.

*sad sack*

A dull person, lacking in energy or interest.

Be on the *safe* side.

Better *safe* than sorry.

*safe and sound*

Completely safe, hale, well.

In the multitude of counselors there is *safety*.

*sagashiate*

To consider, to think about, to investigate.

*sage*

A popular old garden plant. The leaves, when dried and ground up, were used for seasoning sausage and the like. Also a tea made from the dried leaves was good to relieve indigestion and insomnia. Young mothers were advised to take the tea, too, to cut down their overflow of milk if they should have such.

*'sage*

Assuage.

*to gather sage*

To be out courting, to be looking for a mate. "I was out Sunday gathering sage all day, so no wonder I missed seeing you."

Set your *sail* according to the wind.

Set the *sail* as the wind blows.

Take in your *sail* in the time of storm.

Little *said* is soon mended.

Least *said*, soonest mended.

*sailing close to the wind*

Economizing.

*sainted aunt!*

A mild expletive.

*St.-John's-wort*

A prolific little plant rarely growing beyond two feet in height. Its bright yellow flowers are noticeable in waste fields and along the roadsides nearly all the summer. It was named, I am told, because it was common to gather it on St. John's Eve and to hang it at doors and windows against thunder

and evil spirits. There was a belief that on St. John's night the soul had power to leave the body and visit the spot where it would finally be summoned from its earthly habitation. The medicinal properties of St.-John's-wort have been extolled. It was said that an ointment made from its blossoms was good for cuts and wounds of any kind, also a tea made from it was designated *fuga daemonum*, a purgative for demons. It was once supposed to be a good remedy for melancholia, too.

### *St. Phillip's Church*

A famous old ruined church near Wilmington, down the Valley. It was built in 1740 and there it stands in the woods, a melancholy wreck and a reminder not only of man's faith but of man's destructiveness, for it was pretty much wrecked by bombardment during the Civil War.

They are not all *saints* that use holy water.

### *Saints alive!*

An exclamation.

### *Sakes alive!*

A mild interjection.

### *salad days*

Days of greatest success, and days of youth and inexperience.

### *salivate*

A salivary condition brought on by the use of too much calomel and followed by exposure to cold or wet weather. See "calomel."

To liquidate, to shoot full of holes. "Boy, you reach in that hip pocket once more like that and I'm going to salivate you."

### *sallet*

Salad. See "creasy sallet."

The best side of a *saloon* is the outside.

### *salt*

There are all sorts of superstitions connected with salt. Of course, the common one known by everybody is that if salt is spilled, the only way to keep off bad luck is to take some of the spilled salt and throw it over one's left shoulder. Then any possible evil spell to come will be dissipated and stopped.

Salt was also good to help trees to bear. I remember we had a pear tree out near the woodpile at our home and it was barren. An old man told me if I would bore a hole in it and put salt in that hole and stop it up, the tree would begin to bear. I did as he commanded and, sure enough, the tree did start to bear.

Also in the old days Valley people used to put a saucer of salt mixed with earth under the cooling board of a corpse. The salt was supposed to be an emblem of the immortal spirit and the earth a symbol of the mortal flesh. This custom was supposed to keep the corpse from swelling.

Take it with a grain of *salt*.

Help me to *salt*,  
 Help me to sorrow,  
 Brew me my malt  
 And die on the morrow.  
 (A recitation rhyme.)

If the *salt* hath lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted.

Ye are the *salt* of the earth.

Put *salt* on a bird's tail and you can catch him.

Not worth the *salt* that goes in your bread.

### *salt bag*

A little cloth bag of heated salt was one of the most common ways of easing aches and pains. When any of us children had the toothache, my mother would heat some salt, put it in a little bag (sometimes a sugar bag) and have us lie with it against our cheek. It always helped.

### *salted down (away)*

Laid aside, saved up for a rainy day.

### *salt mines*

A place of hard and grinding work, any sort of grueling job. "Well, it's good sitting out here and having a smoke, but now I got to get back to the salt mines."

### *salt of the earth*

A term of high praise. "That John is the salt of the earth."

as *salty* as the ocean

There's a *salve* for every sore.

### *Sambo*

An old Southern term for a Negro male.

It will be all the *same* a hundred years from now.

### *in the same boat*

In the same situation, condition.

*same looking*

To be similar to, to resemble. "He wore the same looking hat as his brother."

*what the Sam Hill!*

A mild interjection.

*sanctified*

In a constant state of holiness, to be living without sin. There is a religious sect popular in the Valley known as the Sanctified Holiness People. In fact, our cook says she is sanctified, and I guess she is, because she has labored for us for some thirty years in the most patient and cooperative way, and she must be sanctified to be able to have done that. I had an aunt who was sanctified. She said it was no trouble at all to be so, for didn't the Bible say, " 'Be ye therefore perfect.' It's mighty easy, Paul, to obey the Bible. And you better start doing that, son, or else — " "Or else what, Aunt Sudie?" "Else your soul will burn in torment forever and ever. Hear me, son?" "Yes, Aunt Sudie."

*sanctified handkerchief (cloth)*

Many of the sanctified and especially devout people in the Valley subscribe to healing by laying on of hands and by tokens and all sorts of hocus-pocus, as I would call it. See "faith healing."

*sand*

Strength, determination, stamina, courage. "She's got a lot of sand in her craw, that girl, and though she's left with five little children, somehow she'll make a go of it."

Ropes of *sand* make mighty poor anchoring.

*sand-bed*

The much-travelled dirt road. In Eastern North Carolina the land being so sandy, the roads in which the wagons travelled, usually in single ruts beat out in the middle by single hitched animals, or double, were referred to as sand-beds.

*sand spur*

A mean and vicious little cactus-like plant found along the Valley seashore.

*sang*

Ginseng.

*sap (saphead)*

A fool, a fuddy-duddy, a dunce.

*Sapona Indians*

The early inhabitants of the Cape Fear Valley.

*Sapona River*

The early Indian name for the Cape Fear River.

*sappy*

Poor grade of lumber. "He sent me over a whole load of sappy old field-pine scantlings and they're warped and bent up like a gang of snakes in the sun."

*sap rising*

Sexual urgings. "Yeh, every time you feel that sap rising you come back and want to sleep with me and leave another baby sproutin' inside me. But I can tell you right now I'll cut out your heart with this butcher knife before I get in that bed with you."

*sarsaparilla*

One of the favorite Valley patent medicines.

*sartain*

Certain.

*sarvice*

Service.

*sashay*

To cut a step in a folk dance. Also to act in a show-off manner.

*sashlight*

A windowpane.

*sass*

Back talk, impolite or vulgar repartee.

Any kind of garden greens.

*sassafrack*

Sassafras.

*sassafras*

A common small tree found throughout the Valley. The sassafras has an ancient and honorable history. It was especially fancied in late Elizabethan England because of Sir Walter Raleigh's colonists on Roanoke Island sending back sassafras bark and roots to be used medicinally. In the Valley we used to make tea out of the roots and it was supposed to be a very healthful drink. Sometimes it was good to thin the blood of children who were too bouncing and cherry-faced. The doctors would prescribe sassafras tea in the old days rather than prescribing bleeding since it was supposed to thin the blood. The Negroes would often drink it in the spring of the year for bad blood.

*sasser*

Saucer.

*Satan*

One of the many names for the devil.

Get thee behind me, *Satan*.

*satchel on to*

To grip or grab or fasten on to. "He satcheled on to me and wouldn't turn loose until he had got a dollar."

What's *sauce* for the goose is *sauce* for the gander.

*saucer*

It used to be the custom in the Valley for people to pour their hot coffee from the cup into the saucer, let it cool and then drink it from the saucer.

To cool. "Let your temper saucer a while."

*saucer-eyed*

Big-eyed in surprise.

*save*

To harvest. "Now that the dry weather's come on, I got to get busy and save my crop."

*Save* today what you'll need tomorrow.

Better *save* a man from dying than *save* him when he's dead.

He that will *save* his life shall lose it.

*save-all*

A small bowl or receptacle for all sorts of odds and ends, hairpins, pennies, finger rings, and so on.

*saved*

Converted, repented of sins, forgiven of sins, ready for death.

Who then can be *saved*?

Others he *saved*, himself he cannot save.

*save face*

To keep one's dignity, prestige, etc., a phrase mightily and ludicrously used by the presidents of the U.S. and politicians during the Vietnam tragic waste.

*to save my neck*

A phrase used for emphasis. "I couldn't call his name to save my neck."



*to save you*

A term of emphasis or intensification. "Do you ever notice maybe you got a noise in your motor and you take your car to the mechanic and it won't make a noise to save you, and then when you're home, it starts up the same old trouble again."

*savigious*

Rough, brutal, full of fire and brimstone. "He was a savigious old devil and wild about young women, and he says that now, though he's eighty years old, at night in his dreams his bed is full of them."

*savvy*

Common sense, knowledge, understanding.

*saw*

Symbol of special danger. "He would fight a circular saw."

*sawbones*

Surgeon, a doctor.

*sawder*

Flattery, obsequious praise. "Don't give me none of that soft sawder. I'm on to you, hosscake."

*sawhorse*

A wooden rack with crossed uprights into which small logs or timber for handsawing were laid. In the old days every Valley farmer had his sawhorse.

As a boy I heard an amusing anecdote told about Abraham Lincoln and his sawhorse. A neighbor had a sorry horse and came to Lincoln and urged a trade. Lincoln asked would he trade sight unseen and no questions asked. The reply was an emphatic yessir — no matter what kind or condition of a horse. They shook hands and the deal was made. Lincoln brought forth his sawhorse. Even then the neighbor might have got the best end of the deal. The real horse might have been fit only for the buzzards.

*sawing gourds*

Snoring.

*sawing sawdust*

Doing or redoing worthless work.

*sawtooth briar*

A mean low-running briar that infests the fields and the hedges. We children used to get our bare feet entangled in them and so we learned to say fierce cusswords very early.

*sawyers*

Katydid. Sometimes referred to as “night sawyers” — from the sounds the males make on hot summer nights. “I couldn’t sleep a wink because of them pesky sawyers.”

*saxifrage*

A little tough-growing plant, which from its name implies it is supposed to be so powerful that its roots can break rocks apart. Tea from its roots was used for stomachache.

*saxifras*

Sassafras.

*say*

A mild exclamation, usually calling attention to what follows. “Say! You better watch what you’re doing, fellow.”

Pronounce or recite. “Go ahead, son, and say your piece.”

*say grace over*

To be in charge of, to be able to handle.

*too many things to say grace over*

Too many irons in the fire, too many jobs.

*saying*

A maxim, a proverb. “It is a saying that you can’t get blood out of a turnip, but you sure can get the turnip.”

*Saying* is one thing, doing another.

*say-so*

Agreement, authority, yea-saying. “He cut that tree down without my say-so.”

*Say-so* is not say-true.

*Say well* is good, but do well is better.

*Says which?*

A query, asking for an explanation of what has just been said.

*scab*

The new skin growing over an old sore. Also a strikebreaker or one who hires in to do a job of another one on strike.

*sca’ce* (pronounced skace)

Scarce.

*scads*

Oodles, a great deal. "They say John Allen Matthews left scads of money when he died and his grandchildren are all quarrelling over it."

*scalding barrel*

A large wooden barrel usually tilted and partly inserted in the ground and filled with scalding water where the newly slaughtered hogs are immersed and twisted around until the hair is pulled off and they are cleaned and scraped with a butcher knife. Then they are hung up on the scaffold or gallows to be gutted. See "hog killing."

*sallywampus*

A humorous good-for-nothing fellow.

*have one's scalp*

Get the best of, win an easy victory over.

*scandalize*

To disgrace.

as *scarce* as frogs' hair

as *scarce* as hens' teeth

*make yourself scarce (sca'ce)*

To leave, to go away in a hurry, get out of sight.

*scarecrow*

An extremely thin and emaciated person.

*scared* as a rabbit

*scared shitless*

To be terror-stricken, horrified.

*scarlet sage*

A very decorative plant, becoming more and more popular in Valley flower gardens.

*scat*

A command to a cat to flee, to get out of the way, to vamoose. It was the custom in all the farmers' houses to have a little square cut out of the corner of a door called "the cat hole," and this was left open so the cat could go in and out at night. There used to be a little folk tale in the Valley about a man who had seven holes cut in the bottom of his door. When somebody asked him why he had seven holes, he said because he had seven cats. "And, brother, when I say scat, I mean scat!"

To run fast, to go in a hurry. "When Willie Gregory fired off his double-

barreled gun through the open window, them serenaders scatted away from there.”

He that *scatters* thorns best not go barefoot.

*Janet Schaw*

A lady of quality who visited the Valley in the middle 18th century and kept a journal of her experiences there. A vivid picture is given of the customs and people of the place and time.

*schnozzle*

The nose.

*school-breaking*

The ending of school, the commencement time. We always spoke of the ending of school in the Valley country as the school-breaking.

As a child I attended old Pleasant Union School located about halfway between the little towns of Lillington and Angier and a mile or so from our home. It was a one-room log building and was heated by a huge fireplace to which we boys playing horsey used to bring from the woods eight-foot lengths of dead pine logs, dragging them in at the front door and across the floor and rolling them into the cavernous fireplace. I don't remember that we ever had any school-breaking exercises in this one-room building. But later my father, along with the neighbors, tore down the old one-room hut and put up a nice, frame two-room building. We always referred to these rooms as the big room and the little room, the one for the upper grades and the other for the lower. A sliding partition was put up between these rooms and I remember that some of us boys working low down near the floor cut a hole through the partition with our pocket knives and used to pass notes into the little room to some of the girls we were in love with, or thought we were.

After we got this two-room building we began to have school-breaking exercises in the spring on the day school ended. These exercises usually consisted of little bits of poetry, recitations, and even sometimes a bit of a play scene. I remember one playlet we put on having to do with a stupid Negro boy who takes some of the white folks' clothes off to be laundered with the understanding that he was to "mangle" them. I played the Negro boy, Rastus, and when I brought the clothes back all mangled (a bundle of substituted rags), I got a big hand from the audience. Maybe this little playlet had something to do with my later writing so many Negro dramas. One of the exercises I always loved at the school-breaking time was the liars' contest. Two boys would come out on the little rough, planked stage and engage each other in as wild imagery of contesting as possible. Most of these liars' contests were made up by the contestants.

I remember my last school-breaking day at Pleasant Union. The next

year I went to school at Buie's Creek Academy. Baxter Upchurch and I contested in lying. We came out before the audience, simulating two neighbors meeting on a road and started off with some of the old "Arkansas Traveler" dialogue (q.v.). I said to Baxter, "Hello, stranger." And he replied, "Hell-o yourself — if you want to go to hell, why go there yourself."

PAUL: (Looking about him): Why don't you cover your house here?  
(He gestures toward the unseen house.)

BAXTER: Can't cover it when it's raining and when it's dry, it don't leak a drop.

PAUL: (Gazing around again): What makes your corn look so yellow?

BAXTER: Fool, I planted the yellow kind.

PAUL: Um-um. How did your 'taters turn out?

BAXTER: Didn't turn out, fool, I dug 'em out.

PAUL: Say, tell me how far is it to where the road forks.

BAXTER: Been living here fifty years and it ain't forked yet.

PAUL: Reckon I can ford the river?

BAXTER: Reckon so, any goose can ford it.

PAUL: Say, yonder comes a steer. You better head him.

BAXTER: I gad, looks like he's got a head on him.

PAUL: I mean stop him.

BAXTER: Ain't got no stopper.

PAUL: I mean turn him.

BAXTER: Don't need no turnin', he's already got the hairy side out.

PAUL: Well, well, well. Say, have you lived here all your life?

BAXTER: Not all of it, fool, for I ain't dead yet.

PAUL: Goodness alive, you sure are ignorant — you don't know nothing!

BAXTER: I know I ain't lost like you. Ha ha ha!

And then we would change the subject and get on with our whoppers.

PAUL: I haven't seen much of you lately, Baxter.

BAXTER: No, I've been mighty busy.

PAUL: What you been doing?

BAXTER: Clearing my newground.

PAUL: How do you clear your newground, Baxter? Must take a lot of cutting with axes.

BAXTER: No, no — no axes, Paul. I go into the middle of the woods, find a big tree, get plenty of sticks of dynamite, fasten them in a belt around the tree, and set 'em off. The explosion clears me several acres all to once.

PAUL: And what happens to you?

BAXTER: Why, I just grab a tree top and ride out. Ha ha!

PAUL: Well, I've been pretty busy myself.

BAXTER: What have you been doing?

PAUL: Looking after my watermelons. Lord, lord, and how they do grow!

BAXTER: They do?

PAUL: Yeh, do. I've been busy making little flat platforms with wheels to 'em so I can take care of 'em.

BAXTER: What in the name of Old Scratch were you doing that for?

PAUL: Because my land is so rich and the watermelon vines grow so fast that they drag the watermelons along the ground and wear them out. So I put these little wagons under the melons so they won't be dragged to death. Now the vines drag the little wagons along with the melons on them and they're growing bigger and bigger all the time.

BAXTER: How big do they grow, Paul?

PAUL: Oh, a certain size. Sometimes the wagons run into the fence and stop and the watermelons grow right there bigger and bigger, and you can look out and see the tops of them, the tops of the rinds over the fence. Sometimes the wagons mire up and the same thing happens.

BAXTER: Um-um — your melons are almost big as my cabbages.

PAUL: And how big are they, Baxter?

BAXTER: Oh, of right good size. I lost my sow and pigs the other day and

hunted and hunted them, and finally I found them. The old sow had et a hole way back in one of my cabbages and there she was as snug as you please, her and the twelve pigs.

PAUL: Well, well, well.

BAXTER: And I been raising some chickens lately too. I got a rooster can eat two of them cabbages in one bait.

PAUL: Ah-hah, that rooster's a little bitty thing compared to my turkey. I got a gobbler that is a gobbler.

BAXTER: How big is your gobbler?

PAUL: Well, he's so big he can set straddle the Pacific Ocean and pick stars out of the elements for grains of corn. Ha ha ha!

BAXTER: Ha ha ha! Well, that is a purty big gobbler, a little bigger maybe than the catfish my Uncle Zacharias caught in the Mississippi River last year. He was so big that they had to get four teams of mules and a log wagon to drag him up the bank and when they cut him open, you know what they found, Paul?

PAUL: No, I don't, Baxter.

BAXTER: Why they found six cords of wood in him and over in the corner was a Jew peddler with his merchandise all spread out. And the peddler looked up and said, "Sale today, piple, ladies' shoes at half price, men's brogans \$1.99."

And so we two liars would carry on our contest as long as we could make up lies or until the audience got tired of us, and the audience seldom did.

### *scintilla*

A tiniest bit, equal to a jot or tittle or iota. "That woman ain't got a scintilla of sense. Just listen to her talk."

### *scoffle*

To ridicule, to jeer at.

### *scoot*

To dart, to run quickly. "Scoot up to Mr. John Parrish's and get me some number 50 white thread."

### *scope*

A large extent, usually of land. "Joe Allan Layton's got a scope of land down there along the Cape Fear River."

### *scorcher*

An especially hot day, also a fiercely hit ground ball in baseball.

Don't rake up old *scores*.

*scorp*

A scraper.

*Scotch*

High temper, fiery emotion. "Better walk soft around that woman — she's got a lot of Scotch in her."

Stinginess. "You needn't ask old Ed McIntyre for any money to buy the baseball suits, he's got too much Scotch in him."

*to scotch*

To prop, to wedge open or set in a fast position.

*Scotch-Irish*

A term applied to the people who came into the Valley from Ireland and had previously migrated to that island from Scotland. Their place in the American system is recorded in many a book. The last eloquent defender of the Scotch-Irish philosophy was President Woodrow Wilson.

*Scotch Snuff*

An especially strong snuff and very popular among the dippers in the Valley as contrasted with Sweet Snuff.

*Scotch stinginess*

Scotch stinginess is proverbial. There was an anecdote to illustrate this which I have heard many times. An American, a Scotchman and a Jew had a very dear friend who died and they decided they would put some token of their appreciation in the coffin with the dead man to be buried with him. So the Jew put in a ten dollar bill, the American put in a twenty dollar bill, and the Scotchman wrote a check for fifty dollars, and put it in and took out the bills for change.

*Scotch stubbornness*

An especially stubborn quality.

*Scotch temper*

Scotch temper is just as tough and stubborn in its way as Scotch stubbornness itself, and they both became one somewhat in the case of Julgar McWhorter and his wife Coziah Ann McWhorter, for soon after they were married these two got into a terrible quarrel. In the height of their Scotch tempers and anger they took out their Bible, put their hands on the Holy Book and swore never to speak to each other again. They lived over in the western part of the Valley, and people who knew them said that, so far as they could ever find out, the two never did speak to each other again, though they lived as man and wife for many, many years. There they lived in their two-room house, each in a separate room. And, believe it or not, they raised a family



of six children but still they kept their oath. The oldest boy Darrach told Mr. Mac that his pa and ma used to communicate with each other through the children. For instance, his pa would say, "Tell your ma I see the chickens out there scratching up her young collards and she better do something to stop 'em." And he'd say that, even though Coziah Ann might be there within three feet of him. And she would say, "Tell your pa I'll fix that other shirt for him tomorrow." At the same time she might be handing her husband the one shirt she had just finished. As one of the Hockaday boys said one day when we were talking about the McWhorters, "Love may be blind but in their case, if you consider the passel of children they brought into the world, they had something just as good as seeing."

*scot-free*

Free of responsibility. (Scot was an ancient tax.)

*"Scotland's Burning"*

A round. We children used to sing this with great glee.

"Scotland's a-burning, Scotland's a-burning,  
Look out! Look out!  
Fire! Fire! Cast on water. Cast on water.  
Scotland's a-burning." and so on.

*scouring mop*

See "shuck mop."

*scours*

A cattle disease of a diarrhetic nature.

*scrabbly*

Rough, ragged, torn.

*scrag*

To betray, to kill.

*scram*

To leave in a hurry.

*scrap*

To quarrel. A fight.

*scrape by*

To barely get by, survive with difficulty.

*Scraping* the bottom of the barrel makes mighty poor music.

*scratch*

Money. "If that millionaire and his wife don't come forward with the scratch, then them kidnappers say they're going to kill the boy."

A tiny bit of writing, a brief note. "She's been gone six months and me, her mother, ain't had a scratch from her, no sir."

The beginning, from poor beginnings. "Nathan Johnson started from scratch without a cent and now look at him — rich as mud."

*Scratch* where it itches.

*Old Scratch*

Another of the many names for the devil.

*up to scratch*

Up to normal health, to good feeling.

*scratches*

A disease affecting the fetlock joint of horses or mules.

*scratchings*

The remnants, the remainders of fat after it has been melted down into lard ready for mixing in as cracklings.

*scratch lettuce*

Money.

*scratch off*

To tear off in a hurry, to cancel.

*scaunch*

To chew noisily as a horse scaunches corn.

*scream*

Outlandish, excessively funny. "His costume was a scream."

*screaming heebie-jeebies*

Delirium tremens, wild hysterics.

*screw*

To have sexual intercourse, to copulate.

A prison guard.

To cheat, to extort from. "I trusted him like a brother and in that land deal he screwed me to a fare-ye-well."

*to have a screw loose*

Somewhat loony, irresponsible.

*screwball*

A misfit, an oddly behaved person.

*screwed up*

Messed up, tangled up, topsy-turvy.

*screwy*

Nutty, crazy.

*scribble-scrabble*

Messy, undecipherable handwriting.

*scribe*

A carpenter's handmade tool which serves as a guide in sawing or attaching weatherboard.

*scrimption*

A small amount.

*scringe*

Cringe. "Every time I see that Kennedy fellow on TV I scringe, thinking of that poor girl he drowned."

*scripture*

The absolute truth, the final authority, a holy and sacred text.

It is always assumed to be bad luck to step on or handle roughly any part of the Bible. There used to be an old Negro in Chapel Hill named Tank Hunter, and I've noticed him going about the street or the campus. Now and then he would stop, pick up a piece of paper and look at it, and when asked why he did that, he said, "Yessir boss, I always watch out and not step on a piece of paper 'cause I'm afraid it might be the name of Jesus would be printed on it, and I wouldn't want to step on the name of Jesus."

The devil can cite *Scripture* for his own purpose.

This is done that the *Scriptures* might be fulfilled.

*scritch*

A high-pitched shriek.

*scrooched up, scrooged up*

Drawn up, huddled up, squatted.

*scrooge*

Squeeze. "Let him scrooge in here beside me. There's room."

*scrouge*

To cheat.

*scrub*

A midget. Also shrub.

*scrubbling*

Small, stunted. Jennie Ban McNeill's husband Archibald was called "Scrubblin' Archie," according to tradition. See "Scrubblin' Archie McNeill."

*scruff*

The nape of the neck. "And then that big schoolteacher ketched that boy by the scruff of the neck and flang him out through the door, and he hit the ground running and hollering for his mammy."

*scrumptious*

Fine, luxurious.

*scrunch*

To crush. "I had a little rabbit, but Mamie rocked on it and scrunched it to death."

*scuffledines*

Scuppernong grapes. Every year members of our community over the hill come when the grapes are odorous. "Mr. Green, could we pick a few scuffledines?"

*scuff some chuck*

To eat.

*scuppernong*

A popular grape in the Valley. The original scuppernong or mother vineyard is reported to be growing on Roanoke Island. The early explorers in the Valley spoke in great praise of the scuppernong. It is a whitish grape as contrasted with the muscadine or black grape.

*scut*

A woman's pudendum, the tail, also a woman's buttocks.

*scutter*

A disparaging term for a person, usually a man. "Well, you tell that scutter I won't be there."

*scuttlebutt*

Rumor, gossip, hearsay.

The *sea* cannot be measured in a quart pot.

The *sea* shall give up its dead.

May there be no moaning at the bar  
When I put out to *sea*.

He goes to *sea* in a sieve.

All the rivers run into the *sea*, yet the *sea* is not full.

*seagull*

A specially protected bird. It is said to be bad luck to kill one.

*sealed, sanctified and made whole*

An alliterative phrase descriptive of those who have been saved from nature to grace and are sanctified and are marked on the forehead with the seal of the Holy Ghost.

*seance*

A group-sitting of spiritualists, usually gathered together to get messages from the other world. It is surprising how so many otherwise sensible people have gone haywire over this belief.

*Search* others for virtues, yourself for vices.

*search me*

A phrase meaning I don't know. "Where do you think he lost it?" "Search me."

*season*

A rain, especially good weather for growing crops. "Last night we had a good season and this morning you can see the crops just shaking with joy."

For everything there is a *season* and a time.

*seat warmer*

An indolent person.

*sec*

Abbreviation for second. "Wait a sec, won't you, till I can get my britches on."

*sech*

Such.

*Second* thoughts are best.

*Second Coming*

The Second Coming of Christ.

Most Christian sects believe in this. It will take place, so they say, when time shall be no more — when Gabriel blows his horn on judgment day and "the graves shall open" and all souls will rise up to meet the Lord and move on to be judged by the Almighty — the "sheep" to rest and be happy in heaven, the "goats" to burn and broil in hell.

*second fiddle*

Second-rate, an inferior role.

“It needs more skill than I can tell  
To play the *second fiddle* well.”

*seconds*

A second helping of food. “Hey, Cap’n, ain’t there no seconds for a good boy?”

A bran-like flour second to the first milling.

*second sight*

Clairvoyance, powers of prevision, divination.

There are innumerable instances recounted of second sight. One day when a group of us local historians visited old Longstreet Church, now on the Fort Bragg Military Reservation, Mr. Shaw, one of the members, told us about a Negro man who had this gift of second sight.

“Over across the creek there,” said Mr. Shaw, “a family lived, consisting of a mother and daughter, two sons and the father. Well, in the Civil War the father and sons went away to fight, and they were all three killed. But before the news came that they were all three killed, Nicholas had a vision that they were dead. This Nicholas was a runaway slave just passing through the neighborhood, and he came to the house over there and asked the good lady if she could feed him and give him a place to sleep in the barn. He looked like an honest fellow and she being lonesome with her husband and sons gone to war said he could. My daddy told me about this.

“Well, the next morning Nicholas came to the house, his hat in his hand, and he said, ‘Missus, the Lord’s done come to me in a vision last night, and the Lord said to me, ‘Nicholas,’ he said, ‘the good lady’s husband and two sons has been killed.’” And then the husband, your good man, he appeared to me in a dream. I saw him in second sight clear as the pa’m of my hand, and he said to me, he said, “Nicholas, me and my boys have all been done killed and I want you to keep on staying there with my wife and take care of things. I want you to do that, Nicholas,” and I said to him, “Cap’n,” I said, “I’ll sure do it.”

“So it was that Nicholas stayed there the rest of his life and looked after the mother and the daughter, for his second sight seeing was true. And nobody ever came hunting for him as a runaway slave.

“Well, time went on, the years passed by, changes came. The mother and the daughter died and only Nicholas was left alive. He was an old man by this time and he stayed in the house that had belonged to the good lady, for the daughter had left it to him. He lived there until the time the government took over the reservation here in 1923.

“Some of you know what a hard time the government had in getting folks to give up their land here at Fort Bragg. But finally after a lot of hard trials everybody had been taken care of except Nicholas. He refused to budge.

The authorities had to get the law of course and at last they put him out, they evicted him. They moved him and his goods down the road there.

"What do you think — the very next day Nicholas was back in the same house. They moved him out again. He came back again.

"Finally my daddy and General Bowley came out here to see Nicholas. The General got interested in him. My daddy told him the story of Nicholas, the way I'm telling it. I think the General was touched by it. Anyhow, he said, 'Nicholas, you stay right here. You can stay on as long as you want to. Of course, we've got an artillery range here but we'll take care of you somehow.'

"So every time after that they'd start the artillery practice, they'd first send a soldier or soldiers over to tell Nicholas that they were about ready to fire and Nicholas would move out of there. And where do you think he'd come? He'd come here to this old Longstreet Church and wait here till the firing was over.

"Of course by that time the church was long deserted, the congregation had passed on and there was no service held here at all. But Nicholas would come here, sit down in the church, and wait until the thunder and fire of the artillery was over just down there to the south of us.

"I reckon a lot of us wonder what the old colored man thought about as he sat here in this church and heard the roar of the guns.

"Yes, he was the last worshiper in Longstreet Church," said Mr. Shaw, "and now nothing ever comes here much except a lot of deer that take shelter from the cold weather under the building."

Later I went out and looked under the church. The north end was some five and half feet from the ground which sloped upward to a couple of feet at the rear. The earth was covered with deer manure. "Enough," said Leon MacDonald, one of the historians, "to make my garden rich as sin."

"Look up there in the gallery," Mr. Shaw went on. "I remember when I was a boy, I used to come here to service and there was one old Negro slave left. Every preaching Sunday he'd be here. Look up on the wall there and you can see a darkish spot. That's where he'd rest his head as he looked down on the pulpit. I reckon the grease and sweat of his hair over the long years made the wall dirty that-a-way. Maybe he was just sitting there snoozing away anyhow and not listening to the sermon."

Sin in *secret* and it will show in the open.

Nothing is *secret* which shall not be made manifest.

### *Secretary of Defense*

A United States Cabinet Member who is thought of by opposing countries as, not Secretary of Defense, but "Secretary of Offense." According to Bertrand Russell, when we consider that the United States has the earth

girdled with military bases — the word offense would seem the appropriate one for the title. The same is now beginning to apply to the U.S.S.R.

*secrets*

A woman's private parts.

Tell her *secrets* at the crossroads.

*see*

To borrow, to take. "Let me see your pencil a minute. I'll hand it right back."

To look after, to accompany. "It's mighty dark down the road there and you'd better see Mis' Nora home."

Can't *see* an inch before his nose.

"I *see*," said the blind man.

"So do I," said the dumb one.

(A facetious proverb.)

*see after*

To take care of. "See after the children while I'm gone, won't you?"

*I've got to see a man.*

Usually used as an excuse to get away from a tiresome person or a bothersome subject or situation. Also to go to the restroom.

*seed*

Past tense of see.

In the morning sow thy *seed* and in the evening withhold not thy hand.

*go to seed*

To grow old, to lose influence, to become useless.

*see double*

To be blinded with anger, to be upset. "He made me so mad I saw double."

*seed ticks*

A little tiny vicious tick.

*Seeing* is believing.

*Seek* and ye shall find.

*Seek* ye first the kingdom of God and all else shall be added unto you.

He that *seeketh* findeth.

Ye shall *seek* me and shall not find me and where I am thither ye cannot come.

Things are not always what they *seem*.



*a seem-so*

A camouflage, a pretense.

*seems to me*

It appears. "Seems to me like I've seen you som'ers before."

*seep*

A miry place. "Better watch out down there, there's a bad seep in the road."

*See-Saw*

The ever-popular game and activity in which children sit astride the ends of a long plank balanced at the midpoint and several feet or more from the ground.

*See-saw*, Margery Daw,  
Jack shall have a new master.  
He shall have but a penny a day,  
Because he won't work any faster.  
(A nursery rhyme.)

*see to*

To attend to, to look after. "I'll see to that balancing of the books right away."

*see where*

Reference to a newspaper source, usually a newspaper account. "I see where the President has ordered more troops to Vietnam."

*segashiate*

To move about, to stir around as among company.

*segregation*

A doctrine of racial separation, based on the belief that the white man was by nature superior to the black. This doctrine was followed in the South for more than three hundred years but is now being broken down.

For a generation or more after the Civil War Uncle Christopher Turner, a Negro, built fires in the Linneyville Baptist Church and worked round and about in the neighborhood for the white man. When he died, penniless and alone, in his little shack on the ridge west of the town, a neighbor or two buried him outside the churchyard wall and stuck up a little piece of pine board at his head which soon rotted down. George Miller, one of the Valley poets, wrote a piece about him which appeared in "The Linneyville News."

"They buried me next the white folks' wall  
So's I could take my rest  
A little better being next

To them that's better blest.  
'Twas me that used to drink the slops  
And chew the white man's crumbs  
And answer to his call and beck  
Of fingers and of thumbs.  
But dirt is dirt and worm's a worm,  
And all men's bones are white  
And grass grows green from where I sleep  
As any towards the light.  
"So let me lie lost in the earth  
Of blackness given to all.  
It makes no difference white or black  
Who's buried by this wall."

According to my father, Uncle Chris was one of the humblest and sweetest souls alive, and maybe George Miller gave thoughts to him he never had. And maybe not.

See also "excursion."

*seized*

Bitten deeply. "That tick has seized and he's gone clean out of sight in the flesh of my leg."

*selah*

God be with you.

*selden*

Seldom.

A man's *self* is his worst enemy.

To thine own *self* be true.

*self-heal*

An aromatic herb that grows plentifully in the Valley. It is an astringent and also a vulnerary.

*Self*-praise is half scandal.

*Self*-praise is no honor.

*Self*-praise is no recommendation.

*Self*-praise is self-slander.

*Self*-preservation is the first law of nature.

*sell*

A cheat, a deception. "The whole deal was a sell."

*sell out*

To run, to flee in terror, to hurry away. "When that wildcat whistle tore loose, man, did that boy sell out!"

*sells* like hot cakes

*send*

To exhilarate, to inspire, to fill with elation. "Lord, that country music do send me."

He hasn't *sense* enough to bell a buzzard.

no more *sense* than a snake has hips

*sensitive plant*

See "be-shame bush."

You look like you were *sent* for and couldn't come.

*seplings*

Saplings.

*seraphim*

Winged guardians of God's throne. They are the next order above cherubim.

*the sere and yellow leaf*

Old age.

*Sermons* in stones and good in everything.

Choose ye this day whom ye will *serve*.

Ye cannot *serve* God and mammon.

No man can *serve* two masters.

They also *serve* who only stand and wait.

*served*

Mated. "We ought to have fresh milk in the spring. I've just had my heifer served by Joe Turner's beast."

*serviceberry*

Same as sarviceberry, which is also called the shadbush. It grows into small-sized trees in all parts of the Valley. The berries are edible and have been used in stimulating beverages.

It *serves* him right.

*set*

Sit.

To harden as cement, concrete.

The number of couples in a square dance, also the number of dances. "I danced six sets before I felt that blister on my foot."

To be ready. "I'm all set to travel, come on."

A number, a few, some. "Come a set of light nights in June and my tobacco's gone up salt creek with the worms."

*set a cap for*

Deliberately plan to win a person's love, mainly refers to a woman's intent.

*set across*

To carry across. "Wait a minute, honey, and I'll set you across the branch."

*set a good table*

To provide plenty of food.

*set a spell*

To pay a visit.

*Set a thief* to catch a thief.

*Set-Back*

A card game. Same as "High, Low, Jack and the Game." Sometimes called "High, Low, Jack."

*set in*

To begin. "It set in to raining about dark, and then we had a gully-washer."

*setter*

The buttocks, the backside. "When that man hit me, I landed on my setter so hard it loosened my back teeth."

*set the hair*

To misscald a slaughtered hog and thus make it harder to get the hair off.

My father was an expert at knowing how long to keep the hog turning in the scalding barrel before jerking it out. When the hair set, it really was hard to get off, and then we'd have to use sharp butcher knives to shave it off, not being able to pull it off with our hands as usual. See "hog killing."

*setting down*

A scolding, a dressing down.

*A setting hen* never grows fat.

*setting in*

The occasion of a baby's delivery.

*setting of eggs*

Eggs that are chosen especially for hatching. The number suitable for a hen should be an odd number if success is wanted — 9, 11 or 13, depending on the size of the hen. "Go up to your Uncle Tom's house and see if we can borrow a setting of eggs."

*setting stick*

A stick used for setting tobacco or potato plants.

*setting up*

A wake or a night's vigil for a sick or a dead person.

*settle*

To pay or to pay back or to exact revenge. "Some of these days I'll settle you for what you've done."

*settlings*

The dregs.

*setup*

An arrangement.

*to set up*

As the hardening of mortar or concrete adhering to stone or bricks.

*set up to*

To court.

*set up with*

To attend to a sick person especially through the night. "I am sure sleepy today. I had to set up with Aunt Josie all last night."

*Seven* is a lucky number.

*seven sleepers*

Legendary heavy sleepers, persons hard to wake, sleepyheads.

*seven stars*

The Pleiades.

*seventh heaven*

A state of bliss, also the highest heaven where God and the most exalted angels dwell.

*seventh son*

An especially gifted person, gifted for healing.

*Seven Up*

A card game, also a popular soft drink.

*seven-year itch*

A very tough and hard to cure condition of the skin. See "pokeberry weed."

If one keeps anything for *seven* years, he will find a use for it.

*sewed up*

See "in the bag."

*sex kitten*

An over-amorous girl.

*shackly*

Broken down, loose-jointed, rickety. "And there old Purdie Banks came riding along in his shackly wagon hauling wood for the professors."

*shack up*

To sleep with, cohabiting of an unmarried man and woman. "Have you heard about Walter and Julie — they're shacking up together now."

*shadbush*

Same as the serviceberry, and how beautiful this tree is in the early spring when it adorns the woods with its foamy lacy blossoms.

*shad days*

The days of early March when the shad begin to run. At least they used to run up the Cape Fear River before the locks were built across it. I can remember vividly how we would all be on the lookout for the Negroes coming up the road from the Cape Fear River direction with their newly-caught shad. My mother used to always look forward to shad time, for we would get these shad weighing several pounds each for fifteen cents apiece. I remember how she complained when the price went up to twenty-five cents. I always hated them because of the millions of bones in them. I still do.

*shade*

A resting place. "Naw, he ain't much of a worker, he's always looking for the shade."

A bit, a small amount. "Yessir, Mr. Matthews is a shade better today."

Don't be afraid of your own *shadow*.

He could walk fifty miles and not stand a single time in his own *shadow*.

He has to stand up twice to make a *shadow*.

So thin she can't make a *shadow*.

He parts with the substance for the *shadow*.

Don't lose your meat for a *shadow*.

*shady*

Vulgar, tricky, unreliable.

*shag*

Pipe tobacco.

*shagbark hickory*

A very fruitful hickory that grows especially in the upper reaches of the Valley. Sometimes they reach enormous size. I have two on my farm that must be sixty or seventy feet tall and two feet or more in diameter near the base.

*shake a leg*

To move in a hurry, to dance, to run.

*shake a stick at*

A phrase of comparison. "I've got more work to do than I can shake a stick at."

*shake down*

A bodily search, also a bribe.

*fair shake*

An equal chance, equitable and just treatment.

*shake hands on*

An act of confirmation and agreement.

*shake hands with St. Peter*

To die, to go to heaven.

*shakes*

The palsy, the shivers. "Aunt Edna's got the shakes so bad now she can't even dip snuff anymore."

Speedily, almost instantly. "I'll be there in three shakes of a lamb's tail."

I'll do it in two *shakes* of a dog's tail.

I'll do it in three *shakes* of a sheep's tail.

*no great shakes*

Of little worth, unimportant.

*shake up*

To upset. "When we told him that his sweetheart had been ketched in the

woods with that new Holy Roller preacher, he said, 'That really shakes me up.' "

To make a sudden change in a thing, or people or business.

*shaking* like a leaf

*shallow*

High-pitched. "He had a right shallow voice just like a girl and people thought he was prissy till he knocked that bully down one day with a pair of brass knucks."

*a shame and a disgrace*

A notorious action, vulgar behavior.

*a shame and a scandal*

Same as a shame and a disgrace.

*shame child*

An illegitimate child.

*shamming*

Pretending, feigning, playing the hypocrite.

Old Kelly Sullivan was another one of these stubborn and headstrong Valley Scotchmen. He was a widower and had a darling daughter named Thereba Jane, called "Therby." He was jealous of her as a lover might be, and watchful of her every moment. Across the creek lived a young man by the name of Alton Hood who was in love with her, and no wonder, for she was a pretty, bouncing thing. Alton, in his way, was just as stubborn as old Kelly and was determined to marry Therby. But the father, finding he was up against it with Alton and that Therby was looking on the young man with favor, decided to take to his bed as a sick man. And there he stayed week after week and month after month, claiming he had some sort of paralysis and was bedridden and helpless. Therby was a kindhearted girl and could never get up courage to leave her father because she thought he was really ill and needed her, and so she cooked for him, bathed him and tended to his chamber pot.

Young Alton began to have suspicions and he argued with Therby that he believed her daddy was shamming and was not paralyzed and that she ought not to be tied to him the way she was. One day when he and she were out in the yard, and he was arguing with her, a peddler came by. In the course of his rigmarole about his goods and his display of clothing before Therby and Alton, the peddler draped himself in a woman's dress to show it off to the girl. Therby didn't have any money to buy anything, of course, because her old dad didn't provide any, and she regretfully had to let the peddler put the dress away, but Alton did buy her a pair of pretty side-combs.



Young Alton was a smart fellow, and seeing the peddler dressed with the woman's dress draped on him had given him an idea. After the peddler left he had a long argument with Therby and finally persuaded her to his plan.

The next day when she was waiting on her daddy, bringing him his mush and trying to comfort him and washing his face and fanning him, she told him about the news of a new woman healer in the neighborhood. "I believe, Pa, that if you let that woman healer come and treat you, you'd get better."

The old man would hear nothing of it. Still she insisted and finally he grudgingly gave in, knowing in his heart that he wasn't going to be healed by anybody — certainly not as long as this Alton was after his heart's jewel.

The next day in came the woman healer. It actually was the peddler dressed up like a woman. Alton had hired him for his purpose. The healer went through all sorts of fumadiddles, examining Kelly and making a spiel about this and that and the other. Therby went out of the room and left them alone, and then the healer began to make love to Kelly and tried to get into bed with him. Kelly was terrified and bounded out with the healer in amorous pursuit, chasing him into the hall and he calling for Therby, Therby, as loud as he could as he ran. Into the yard he fled and there stood Alton and Therby hand in hand and they were laughing at him. Kelly was ashamed down to the ground, and then his shame turned to anger, and he went looking for the healer with his gun. But the peddler had disappeared. After this Therby had a mind of her own and soon she and Alton were married, and the father gave the bride away.

### *shanghai*

To fool, to cheat, to lure into a trap.

### *shank*

The early part of the evening, just before twilight comes. "The shank of the evening is pinking in and it's about time to quit, fellows."

A leg. "Look how that girl shows her shanks — plumb disgraceful!"

### *shankers*

Chancres.

### *shanks' mare*

Feet. "To ride shanks' mare is to go a-foot."

### *shanks' pony*

One's feet. "I come on shanks' pony, that's how I got here."

### *shape notes*

The old time notation in the songbooks where the shape of each note denoted its name. These were much easier to sing than the round notes of the present day.

*Share* and *share* alike.

*shark*

A greedy moneylender.

*sharp*

Clever, smart in a trade.

Stylish, well-dressed.

*sharp* as a briar

*sharp* as a knife

*sharp* as a pin

*sharp* as a tack

*sharp* as a two-edged sword

*sharper*

A swindler, an untrustworthy trader.

The *sharper* the blast the sooner 'tis past.

*shave*

A narrow miss, a close call.

*shaves*

Shafts.

*shavetail*

A new second lieutenant, used in WWI especially.

*sheaves*

Repentant sinners or new converts, ready to be taken into the church, those who are newly-changed from nature to grace.

The deacons in the Holiness Church of God in Jesus Name in Harnett County had a get-together some two years ago to plan for their big annual revival. After they had sung the old song with its loping refrain—

“Bringing in the sheaves, bringing  
in the sheaves,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing  
in the sheaves—”

they got down to business. The head deacon, Simon Bender, said the time had come when they really must go after the sheaves to fill out their church membership. The question before the house was how to do it. One suggested that the deacons themselves should go from house to house where the

unregenerated sinners lived and hold special prayers to bring them into repentance and into the fold. They discussed this pro and con for a while and finally Deacon Bender proposed that they offer some sort of prize for family conversions and memberships in the church.

"We got to work in a family way," he said. At this some of the other deacons snickered, for in the common folk parlance in the Valley "in the family way" meant a woman's being pregnant.

Out of the discussion the decision was finally made to offer a prize of a new deep-freeze refrigerator to the family which would provide the most repentant sinners and conversions, to be taken into the church — all, of course, from that same family. The news was published abroad, and the new evangelist arrived to begin the revival or protracted meeting.

It happened that a couple of miles away on the banks of Little River lived a notorious white woman by the name of Ludie Crane who was already the mother of seven illegitimate children and was expecting another. She was doing well in the business of producing children, for each new one meant an increase in the welfare check that came to her from the Aid for Dependent Mothers agency. She and Uncle Sam were thus in good cahoots, he helping indirectly both to father and support her and her brood.

To add to her notoriety of recent months, a "roomer" had started staying in her house, a dark visaged young man who she said was an Indian and who all the scandalized neighbors believed was a Negro. No one knew where he came from but he showed up at Ludie's house and was living there with her, maybe as her common-law husband.

The revival in this Holiness Church of God in Jesus Name got going with the usual clamor and singing and talking in tongues, holy dancing and cuttings up. But even so, the repentant sinners were few and far between. Then one day Ludie and her Indian and her passel of young'uns all showed up at the church and took their seats near the rear. The family were pretty decrepit looking, even though Ludie had tried to dress everyone up a bit. The congregation was upset, but Ludie's family behaved circumspectly enough. The next day they showed up again and this time they came early enough to get a seat near the middle of the church. Again the congregation buzzed and whispered and gritted its teeth. The third day Ludie and her family were on the front row, and when the Reverend Seelie Bryant in his hasseling and phlegmy great voice called on sinners to come to the mercy seat of God and find salvation, Ludie and her family, including the Indian "lover," all trooped forward and knelt at the mourners' bench and there cried out loudly in dolorous and sobbing calls, the whole nine of them, even to the youngest little boy, Roosevelt, for the Lord to have mercy on their sinful souls.

The upshot of it was that all of them stood up and confessed and said that they were saved from nature to grace and wanted to be baptized and

become members of the church. This pretty much broke up that day's meeting. Reverend Seelie pronounced the benediction and the service ended.

After Ludie and her crew had gone away, the congregation gathered in knots here and there about the church grounds and let loose a medley of judgments and queries as to what to do. The deacons met inside the church in a called session.

"What a come-off, what a come-off!" said Deacon Lester Currin.

"The whole thing is a swindle," said another.

"It must be so," said Deacon Bender. "She's just after that deep-freeze. They're no more converted — that gang of low-down trash — no more converted than my prize hog."

"But what can we do, what can we do?" another one asked anxiously.

They turned to Reverend Seelie Bryant, who was meeting with them, for his advice. "They's only one more day of the revival," said the preacher, "and they'll be back I'm sure and will stand up to receive the right hand of fellowship."

"I ain't gonna shake hands with nary one of them," said Deacon Currin, "no how!" But at the advice of the preacher they all decided they would go through with giving them the hand and then defer the baptizing indefinitely. This would take care of things for a while.

"If we ever let them folks inside our church as members," said Deacon Bender, "it will destroy this house of God. People won't come here anymore. They'll only be them nine as a congregation and no one to preach to them." So it was decided, and next day the congregation passed along in front of the line of Ludie's family and gave them the limp hand of fellowship along with a few other scattering sinners lined up with them, the latter of course getting a good warm handshake.

I heard about the dilemma, and one day some months later I happened to meet Deacon Bender at a store in Lillington and discreetly brought up the subject and asked what had happened to Ludie and the family — had she ever been awarded the deep-freeze, and so on?

"Ain't nothing happened to 'em," said the deacon sharply, "except that Ludie has another woods colt, and of course an increase in her pay from Uncle Sam. Lord a-mercy, what's this country come to! And as for the deep-freeze, Mr. Green, she'll never get it, because we ain't never gonna baptize her and the young'uns. We've just put off the baptizing, and now it's into December and the water's too cold, so we'll wait till next summer." Then he went on somewhat brightly, "We've got one hope, though."

"What's that, Mr. Bender?" I asked.

"Well, we've been to the man that owns the house they live in, Patrick Hockaday, and he has promised to turn the family out."

"And then what will those children do, say, with winter coming on?"

"We're hoping they'll move away, that's what," he said, "move slam

out of this neighborhood.”

“But where will they go, you think?”

“I don’t care where they go but they’re going, and she has enough money from Uncle Sam to pay their way som’ers anyhow.”

And that was what happened. Ludie didn’t get her deep-freeze, she and her family moved away to another county, and no one has taken the trouble to find out where she went. Maybe I will someday. And I imagine by this time she is pregnant again by the Indian and is looking forward to an increase in her monthly check.

*sheba*

A finery-dressed or attractive woman.

*shebang*

A project, a happening, also a crowd, a collection. “The whole shebang ought to be indicted for raising that ruckus like that and if I were sheriff, I’d put them behind bars.”

*she-cow*

A cow as contrasted to the prudish “he-cow,” the latter being used in the place of bull.

*shed of*

To be free from, separate from. “Oh, I got shed of that dog long ago.”

*sheeny*

A Jew.

One bad *sheep* spoils the flock.

It is a foolish *sheep* that confesses to the wolf.

*sheep-burr*

Cocklebur.

*sheep-eyes*

Languorous courting looks.

*sheephead*

A stupid person.

*sheep laurel*

This laurel grows in moist localities and in dry sandy acid soils and even bogs in North Carolina. The leaves and twigs and flowers of the shrub are narcotic and poisonous and have been used in the treatment of syphilis, scald-head and other skin infections. According to the word handed down, the Cree Indians used sheep laurel as a tonic and for bowel complaints.

*sheep shearing rain*

Rain in May which usually comes about the time of the blackberry winter when it is time for shearing the sheep.

*sheep sorrel*

The oxalis. Old Miss Zua Smith used to use this as an ingredient in her cancer salve. See "cancer cure."

*three sheets in the wind*

Drunk.

*sheik*

A glamorous lover.

*shekels*

Money. "Shell out some of them shekels, brother, if you want to do business with me."

*on the shelf*

To be taken out of circulation, laid aside, old and outworn. "Yep, I'm laid on the shelf now and all I do is watch others work and draw my social security."

*shellacking*

A whitewashing, a complete defeat, a contest in which the opposition fails to score. "Duke sure give Carolina a shellacking Saturday — did you see it?"

*shell out*

Pay up, to contribute money.

*shelve*

To delay, put off, lay aside.

*shelving*

Lumber suitable for making shelves, book shelves, for instance.

*she-male*

A woman who "wears the britches," the female boss.

*shenanigans*

Hysterical behavior, fits of temper, funny, tricky doings. "You'd better watch that fellow and his shenanigans."

*shepherd*

A preacher, the head of the congregation.

The good *shepherd* gives his life for his sheep.

as welcome as the *sheriff*

Every man should be *sheriff* of his own heart.

### *Sherman's bummers*

The raggle-taggle foragers of Sherman's army during its march through the South in the Civil War, devourers of the leavings of the country and the objects of many a citizen's curse and shaken fist of malediction.

My father used to tell how he as a boy of fifteen first met up with Sherman's bummers. He was out ploughing in the field with a little pony. He said that Grandpa's other few horses had been taken and hidden in the juniper swamp half a mile away. While he was ploughing along, he heard the jingling of swords and the tramping of horses' feet, and he looked out and there came a swarm of Yankees along the road. Some of them jumped right over the rail fence, hurried out where he was, grabbed the plough lines away from him, unhitched the pony and led him off. They stood Papa up against a tree and said they were going to shoot him if he didn't tell where the other horses were.

We children used to listen to this rarely-told story with shivers of delight. My father was a modest man and talked very little about himself. But he said that even at the threat of death he didn't tell where the few horses were hid, and the bummers finally went away.

Aunt Nancy Demming who was working at Grandpa's house at that time said that she saw one of the bummers later sitting behind the barn "doing his business," and he had a tail and his feet were forked like the devil's. She also used to tell how they caught Grandpa Green, took him out and hung him up by his thumbs in the orchard and tried to get him to tell where the silverware and the horses were hid. I think old Miss Nancy made this up, for my father didn't remember anything about such an incident. But to this day Sherman's bummers are remembered in the Valley — from Wilmington to Chapel Hill — with curses and an abusing of tongues.

Jesse Hargrave of Chapel Hill married Christopher Barbee's daughter — the same Christopher who gave much of the land for building the University — and settled with his bride on what came to be known as Hargrave's Mountain a mile or so east of the town. Actually it was a little low hill and overlooked Bowling Creek to the north.

When I was a student in Chapel Hill in 1916, some remains of the old Hargrave house still stood, and just to the east was the Hargrave burying ground where Jesse Hargrave and his wife and relatives were buried and also some of the old Hargrave slaves, so I was told. There used to be an iron fence around the grave which was pointed out to me as the resting place of one of the Kenan family, too. Anyway, William Rand Kenan's mother was the daughter of the Hargraves and the granddaughter of old Christopher Barbee. Mr. William Rand Kenan told me that he used to visit the Hargrave place when he was a little boy. The last time I saw Mr. Kenan alive in Florida,

he also said to me, "Did you know that I was the man who put the first electric light in the University? Yes sir, I was. I wired up some of the buildings and that was the first electric light they had." Then he went on to ask me if I had read the story of his life. I told him I had, and he said that that was good.

Mr. A.W. Long wrote a book called *Son of Carolina*, and he tells in it of his visits as a boy to the Hargrave place and how Sherman's bummers came into the yard once — coming up the road from the spring below the hill which is now owned by Dr. Maurice E. Newton and which I used to own. The Hargraves, according to Long, had a cook named Betsy, and when she heard that the bummers were coming, she put on all of her dresses, seven of them, putting the best one nearest her skin and then in sequence of lesser quality on out. When the bummers arrived, she fled upstairs and hid in a feather bed. The sergeant of the group scoured around trying to find some stray shellcorn, but all he found was some sweepings in the barn and an old rooster. He wrung the rooster's neck because he had caught him, he said, "crowing with a Confederate accent." Then he searched the house, and presently he leaned out the window and called, "Come up here boys, I've found the dying Confederacy!" He had discovered Betsy hiding in the feather bed.

Fred Hargrave, Jesse's son, who was supposed to be the handsomest man in Orange County and had a beautiful tenor voice with which he amused the faculty wives and ladies in town at parties — he, Fred, when the bummers came, rushed out into the woods and tied his precious gold watch to a little twig among some leaves to keep it hid. After the bummers left, he went out to find the watch and he never could find it. He had lost the remembrance of the place he had hid it.

I bought this Hargrave land in 1933 and built a house on the site of the old Hargrave home. Later with the help of Collier Cobb, Clyde Hornaday and the landscape people at Raleigh, I laid out roads and streets, and the town spread in that direction. Later, too, I sold the Greenwood house to young Watts Hill, and now Elizabeth and I sojourn in Chatham County among the hopping rabbits. Yet every time I pass along Greenwood Road and see the house on the hill, I am likely to think of Sherman's bummers and the old days gone by when men with their senseless wars, even as now, were marauding the earth. See "ghost" and "McGregor."

She *sells* seashells by the seashore.

Who sells seashells by the seashore?

She sells seashells by the seashore.

(A tongue twister.)



*shet*

Shut.

*sheth*

Sheath, a shuck, a scabbard.

*shet of*

Shed of.

*shew-bread*

An accumulation of white matter under the skin of an unwashed penis head.

*shift*

A woman's undergarment.

*shifty*

Unreliable, of guilty appearance. "I don't like that fellow — he's got shifty eyes."

*shilling*

A dime. When I was a boy in Harnett County, nearly all the old people spoke of dimes as shillings. In fact my grandfather's account book listed the dimes always as shillings, and my father used to say "a shilling" or "ten cents" instead of a "dime."

*shilly-shally*

To vacillate, hesitate, waver, act foolishly and uncertainly.

*shim*

A small metal wedge or washer. "Put a shim in there and I think the wheels'll be canted right."

*shimmy*

To shake, to vibrate excessively, to weave about. "When that colored sister got to shimmying up and down, seemed her big old bubs would bounce out of her dress."

A hip-wiggling type of dance.

Also a chemise.

*Shin (Shinny)*

An old-time game that was played in the Valley with a little wooden block or pellet and a crooked-ended stick, a kind of crude golf game. Aunt Fanny McDade who used to live on Cameron Avenue in Chapel Hill told me about how the Negro pupils, when she was a child, used to play Shinny there at the Negro school.

*shinbone*

The bone in the front part of the leg below the knee.

*shindig*

A party, a dance, a joyous loud celebration.

*shindy*

Same as shindig.

*shine*

Fancy, liking. "He took a shine to her the very first time he ever saw her, and now they're getting married."

*to cut a shine*

To cut up boisterously.

*shiner*

A black eye. "When he called me a son-of-a-bitch, that's when I hung that shiner on him."

*shiners*

Silver dollars or gold pieces, money.

*shines* like a new penny

*shingle*

To cut hair very close. "She went and got herself a shingle, and now she looks like a picked chicken."

*hang out one's shingle*

To go into business on one's own, to put up one's sign as to a trade.

*shingles*

A disease of irritated skin. One cure that I used to hear about was to take the blood drawn from a black cat's tail and spread it over the afflicted parts and the shingles would disappear.

*shinplaster*

Greenback money.

*shiny* as a new dollar

A great *ship* needs deep water.

*ship comes in*

Good fortune, wealth. "I will pay you when my ship comes in."

*ship stuff*

Bran for hogs. My father used to always say that when he got his ship stuff, his hogs would really fatten up.

*“The Ship That Never Returned”*

Another tear-pulling, throat-choking song which was popular in our family.  
My mother taught it to us at an early date.

“On a summer day, as the waves were rippling  
by the soft and gentle breeze,  
Did a ship set sail with her cargo laden  
for a port beyond the seas.”

Chorus

“Did she never return? No, she never returned,  
and her fate was yet unlearned  
Tho' for years and years there were fond  
ones waiting for the ship that never returned.

“Said a feeble lad to his anxious mother,  
‘I must cross the wide wide sea,  
For they say, perchance, in a foreign climate  
There is health and strength for me!’  
'Twas a gleam of hope in a maze of danger  
And her heart for her youngest yearned;  
Though she sent him forth with a smile and blessing  
On the ship that never returned!

“ ‘Only one more trip,’ said a gallant captain,  
As he kissed his weeping wife.  
‘Only one more bag of the golden treasure,  
And 'twill last us all through life!  
Then we'll spend our days in a cozy cottage  
And enjoy the rest I've earned!’  
But, alas, poor man, who sailed commander  
On the ship that never returned!”

*shirt-button bush*

Spirea.

*shirttail boy*

A small boy prior to adolescence.

*shirttail shower*

A light rain.

*don't give a shit*

Don't care, makes no difference.

*shit-ass*

A lowdown person.

*up shit creek without a paddle*

In a precarious situation.

*shit-hole*

The anus.

*shit-house*

The privy.

*Shit, no!*

An emphatic denial, a folksy expletive.

*shit out of luck*

Completely unlucky.

*shit, piss and conception*

A bilge of frothy talk, a coarse and untrustworthy person. "Yonder comes old shit, piss and conception, let's leave."

*shits*

Diarrhea.

*shivaree*

A rough and rowdy party, often at the expense of two newlyweds.

*shive*

A knife.

*shivering owl*

Screech owl.

*shivers*

The shakes, chills.

*shoe*

To shoe, as "shoe a horse," or as the North Carolina ballad says, "Oh, who will shoe my pretty little feet? Who will glove my hand?"

The *shoe* pinches.

If the *shoe* fits, wear it.

He knows where the *shoe* pinches.

He cares more for the *shoe* than the foot.

*shoe comes untied*

Shows that someone is thinking of you.

*“Shoe Darling”*

A popular fiddling piece.

*shoe-fitted*

To become settled as in a new house.

*to shoe goslings*

To waste time, piddle about.

*Shoemakers* should stick to their lasts.

*shoe on the other foot*

A reversed condition, a turnabout situation.

I would hate to be in his *shoes*.

I set my *shoes* in the shape of a T  
That tonight in my dreams my true love I'll see,  
The shape of his body, the color of his hair,  
The everyday clothes that he does wear.

(A divination rhyme.)

*shoestring*

A weak thing, slight margin. “He’s opening that play on a shoestring and I believe it’ll fail.”

*shoestring leather*

My father used to keep a roll of leather or of sheepskin from which now and then he would cut shoestrings for the children’s shoes. I would stand and admire him as with his sharp knife he would peel off a long slender string. Some of us children usually would hold the ends of the leather while he cut and then how proud we were when we got our new shoestrings in our shoes and walked away to school in the morning.

*sho’ nuff*

Sure enough.

*shoo*

A command for driving away chickens or any fowl, but not applied to animals.

*shoofly*

A fast passenger train on the Seaboard Airline Railroad. “Listen here, boy, and I’ll show you how to sound that shoofly on my harp.”

*shook*

Shock, as a shook of wheat.

*all shook up*

Disturbed, deeply troubled in mind. "When I heard about Elsie Denning dying all of a sudden, I was all shook up."

*shoot*

To say forth, to speak out. "Go ahead and shoot — what's on your mind?"

A young plant, a sapling or a young child. "Henry's Polly is getting to be a right good-sized shoot of a girl."

*Shoot!*

A mild interjection.

*Shoot* the works.

like *shooting* fish in a barrel

*shooting iron*

Pistol.

*Shooting Match*

A contest of skill in marksmanship. Most always in these days the matches are termed "turkey shooting" because that is the prize. Away back they had shootings for a cow or a bull or a hog.

Also shooting match means a crowd of people, a gathering. "And then blest if he didn't stand up there and tear loose in his speech and insult the whole shooting match."

Speaking of shooting matches, I remember when Percy McKaye was visiting us in Chapel Hill many years ago, he told me of a shooting match he saw once in the Appalachian Mountains. He was up among the mountaineers gathering folklore and he came to a cabin and a very old man was sitting on the front porch with a rifle and was banging away at some mark up in a high pine tree. McKaye said the time of day with him and got to talking, as was his way, hoping to collect some folklore. The old man informed him he was practicing up for a shooting match and then he gave McKaye a sample of his skill. He shot a small pine cone out of the top of a high pine. Then reloading his rifle he fired at a small knot in the lot fence and knocked it out. McKaye was deeply impressed, and then the old man said that he wasn't much good at all, but he ought to see his daddy shoot.

"Your daddy?" said McKaye astounded. "You don't mean your daddy's living."

"Yeh, he's living," said the old man. "I'm eighty-nine, and he's still living. He's there in the house, and he can still shoot to beat the band. Let me show you. Wait a minute," he said. He went inside and helped an incredibly old man out on the porch and set him down in the chair. Then

he put the rifle in the old man's hands and pointed to a knot in the fence farther on than the one he'd shot, and according to McKaye he himself couldn't see the knot. The old man got the rifle raised and fired off. Then the son took McKaye out to the fence and showed him where the small knot had been knocked out.

"Ain't he somethin'," said the son pridefully.

"He is that," said McKaye. "How old did you say he is?"

"He's going on 110," said the son.

Then the group of us who were listening to McKaye's tale guffawed a bit and then added to it by saying, "No doubt the older man had a daddy somewhere about 149 — or more."

"Yes, that's right," said McKaye. "I asked the fellow about other members of the family, and the son laughed and said, 'Our folks don't ever die. We hang them up behind the door and just keep them dried up. I could show you some if you stay around a few days, stranger.'"

McKaye said he doubted he could stay long enough to see this sight.

*shoot off*

To have a sexual orgasm (male).

*shoot off at the mouth*

To talk profusely and foolishly.

*shoot one's wad*

To use one's best argument, to make a final effort, to gamble all of one's money.

*shoot the breeze*

To gabble, to indulge in idle talk.

*shoot the works*

Risk, gamble all, an all-out effort.

*shoot up*

Drug taking.

Keep the *shop* and the *shop* will keep thee.

*shore*

Sure.

*Short* and sweet like an old woman's dance.

*short* as pie crust

A *short* horse is soon curried.

*shortcake*

Cornbread cake made short by extra grease and seasoning.

*to shortchange*

Fail to fulfill, cheat.

To penalize, to oppress, to mistreat. "The poor boy was shortchanged by his parents and that's why he joined the Ku Klux Klan."

*shortchange artist*

A swindler.

*short end of the stick*

An unfair deal, to come out with a bad bargain. "The folks around Jordan Dam have been given the short end of the stick by Uncle Sam."

*shortening (short'nin') bread*

A special and delicious cornbread. We used to sing a Negro song about it—

"Two little niggers  
A-lying in the bed,  
Heels cracked open  
Like shortening bread.

"Don't that looka like shortening, shortening.  
Don't that looka like shortening bread.

"Put on the kettle  
And put on the led (lid).  
Mammy's gonna cook  
Some shortening bread.

"Don't that looka like shortening, shortening.  
Don't that looka like shortening bread."

*short hair*

Weakness in an unfortunate situation. "Iran has got Uncle Sam where the hair is short."

*shorthanded*

To lack help, to be without assistants. "I was sort of shorthanded in housin' my crop, and so I lost some of my late cotton in the black gusts."

*short horn*

Penis. "Roll out, all you buck privates, 'cause we're going to have short horn inspection."

*short rows*

Near the end of a job. "We're getting in the short rows now, thank goodness!"



*short talk*

An impolite reply, a brusque or sassy answer.

*shot*

To be worn out, exhausted, ruined, bushed. "The motor in my car is shot."

Shut.

A dram, a quick drink. "Give me a shot of that red-eye."

The bad *shot* is a ready liar.

*shotgun wedding*

A marriage usually forced on the groom by the bride's relatives. Up until recently shotguns were not allowed in Hollywood movies. They were censorable in too many states. I remember in writing a movie for Twentieth-Century-Fox, with John Ford as director, at first I had a shotgun wedding in it. The Breen Censorship Office after reading my script wrote back that we could not show a shotgun wedding and suggested the use of baseball bats on the part of the irate brothers of the bride. As foolish as this seems, baseball bats were used in the movie.

*shot in the arm*

An encouraging happening.

*shotten*

Dislocated, as hip-shotten.

*shoulder of land*

A ridge of land, lengthy little hillock.

*shouldn't be surprised*

A statement of agreement or confirmation. "I hear a big snow is coming."  
"I shouldn't be surprised."

*shout*

A religious cry. "And at that moment when Brother Roland was really going to town in the pulpit, old Miss Howington let out a wild shout and broke into a holy dance."

*shove*

To work hard. "You boys must shove today so we can finish this fodder pulling."

*shoved to death*

Very busy.

*shove it up your ass*

A term of insult or low derision.

He must have been fed with a *shovel*.

*put to bed with a shovel*

Buried.

*shove off*

To leave in a hurry, to move away quickly, to start. "All right, fellows, let's shove off. We've got a long way to go."

*show*

Pregnant. "Miss Polly Branch is beginning to show, poor thing."

An entertaining, outlandish person, a bizarre character.

*get the show on the road*

To get things under way, to get a job started.

*shower*

Many, a lot. "Mr. Ed Deal lives over there and I hear he's got a shower of children — nineteen, I think it is, and they say that when he goes to town and buys a five-pound bag of sugar, he comes back, with all the children lined up around the table with their coffee waiting. He opens up a corner of the sack, goes around, dumps some sugar in each cup, and when he finishes, he throws the empty bag out through the door."

*shower down*

To use extra strength or speed. "He showered down on his bike and left everybody behind."

*show the white feather*

Act cowardly.

*show up*

To arrive. "If you wait long enough, Percy will show up."

*shrimp*

A small, picayunish or detestable fellow.

*shrink*

To lose by miscarriage as in the case of animals. "My sow has shrunk her pigs."

There are no pockets in a *shroud*.

*shrub*

To cut sprouts or to dig up grubs and roots in making land ready for plowing. "Paul, you and Hugh take your grubbing hoes and get to shrubbing down there in that newground."

*shrunk-gutted*

Emaciated.

*shuck*

The past tense of shake. "I shuck the bushes and out that hog come a-helling."

*in the shuck*

Corn pulled but unshucked, not yet born. "He's got five children and one in the shuck."

*shucking peg*

A little sharp-ended peg some five or six inches long with a looped string to go around a third or fourth finger to secure it. Held between the third and fourth finger, it was used to open the end of the cornshuck. In my neighborhood these pegs were usually made from a dogwood sprout and the end hardened in the fire. See "cornshucking."

*shuck mop*

A homemade mop for floor-scouring. I can still hear my mother say, "Mary, we've got to scour that kitchen floor Saturday. It's a shame and disgrace for Sunday" — which it wasn't. "Paul (or Hugh), get me some new cornshucks."

These mops were made from a sawed-section of a heavy pine planking — say, two inches thick, eight inches wide and twelve inches long. A slanting hole about an inch and a half in diameter was bored in the middle for the insertion of the handle stick. Some eight or ten other holes of the same size were bored through the piece of plank and a wad of shucks, after being well-wetted, was firmly twisted into them from the bottom side. Then with a tub of water handy into which the mop could be dipped now and then for cleansing, the scouring began. Back and forth, back and forth my mother would push and pull the mop, the while she bore down heavily on it for better cleaning, singing away the while, "Blessed Be the Name." Often she would put one of us larger children to scouring. Dull, dull, dull, when it came my turn. Back and forth and forth and back, the while I carried on a soliloquy inside my head. "What's the matter with my mother? The dang floor looks clean to me. It's them preachers, that's what. They'll be here Sunday and she wants to show off what a good housekeeper she is." And then I'd relent and start condemning myself as a sorry, unappreciative son.

I might mention that sometimes Mother would scatter a sprinkling of sand on the floor to aid the mop in "cutting away the dirt."

*shucks*

A mild interjection. "Shucks, that's nothing."

Thick *shucks* on a corn ear denote a hard winter to come.

*to feed shucks to the geese*

To act foolishly.

*shug*

A familiar term for sugar, a term of endearment.

*shush*

To hush, to put down a speaker or a noise.

*shut-eye*

Sleep.

*shut of*

Rid of, same as shed of.

*shy*

Short or lacking. "I counted the church funds, and he was shy \$4.65."

A *shy* cat makes a brave mouse.

*sich*

Such.

*sick* as a buzzard

I was *sick* and ye visited me.

*sick as a dog*

Sick at the stomach.

*sick stomach*

A common old trouble in the Valley, usually with vomiting. How often I've heard my mother speak of having the sick stomach and in pregnancy the heartburn. She carried a piece of milk of magnesia in her apron pocket and now and then took a bite of it.

*to take sick*

To become nauseated or ill.

*the sickness*

The monthlies.

*side*

Pride, airs, highfalutin manners. "Since she married that Justice of the Peace she puts on a lot of side."

To plough dirt toward a plant. "I've got to side my cotton soon's it's dry enough."

He laughs on the wrong *side* of his face.

*sideboards*

The boards put on the side of a cart, a wagon or trailer to enlarge the load carrying ability.

*side-comb*

The combs that girls used to wear in their hair and some still do.

*sidekick*

A pal, a comrade.

*side meat*

Bacon, fatback, middling.

There are two *sides* to every question.

*sidesaddle*

A lady's saddle. Up until a few years ago no lady who was a lady would ride "straddle," as it was called.

*sidesaddle plant*

See "pitcher plant."

*side table*

The inferior place. "The Negro race has eaten at the side table long enough."

*sidewinder*

A species of rattlesnake, a blow from sideways, also a dangerous sneaky guy.

*side with*

To agree with, to take the part of.

*siding*

The rough outside boards of a house, and the rough bark strips sawed from a timber log. Also a piece of spur track branching from a railroad.

*sidling*

Steep, sloping. "The land's too sidling to be worth much for farming."

*siff (syphilis)*

"The doctor says I've got that old siff, but I ain't paying no mind to it."

A *sigh* goes farther than a shout.

*sight*

Much, a lot, a great deal. "He's got a sight more sense than to do a thing like that."

Out of *sight* is out of mind.

*sight for sore eyes*

A welcome appearance of someone or something.

*sight rather*

To prefer strongly. "I'd a sight rather see you dead than to enter that infidel university at Chapel Hill."

Their *sights* are set too high.

*sights and dominicker owls*

Everything. "I've seen sights and dominicker owls and they ain't nothing left."

*sight unseen*

On trust without examining or testing. "He bought that mule sight unseen and now he realizes how bad he got burnt."

*signify around*

To hint, to suggest.

*sign on the dotted line*

Confirm or make legal.

*pay sign to*

Pay attention to.

*Signs* don't produce money.

All *signs* fail in dry weather.

*Silence* gives consent.

*Silence* is golden.

There's no substitute for brains but *silence* does very well.

A man of *silence* is a man of sense.

as *silent* as a ghost

as *silent* as falling dew

as *silent* as night

as *silent* as the dead (or death)

as *silent* as the grave

as *silent* as your shadow

Watch out for a *silent* man.

A *silent* man is a wise man.

*“Silent Night” (Stille Nacht)*

Another perfect Christmas carol. The melody is by the German composer, Franz Gruber (1818), and the original words by Joseph Mohr (1818). The English translation is by John Freeman Young (ca. 1863), and it too is perfect. In our Christmas serenades and at the Christmas doings in the old Pleasant Union Church we usually led off with “Silent Night,” soon to be followed with the pulsing “Joy to the World.” The Valley rang with these carols at Christmastime.

“*Silent night*, holy night,  
 All is calm, all is bright  
 Round yon virgin mother and Child,  
 Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
 Sleep in heavenly peace,  
 Sleep in heavenly peace.”

*silk grass*

Same as bear grass or Spanish bayonet. See “yucca.”

*silk tree*

The mimosa tree.

as *silly* as a goose

*silver bullet*

Silver in any shape, form or fashion is supposed to be good protection against all kinds of aches and pains, such as toothache, and especially powerful against supernatural evils — voodoo spells, evil-eye or whatnot. And a silver bullet is especially effective in combatting a mystic enemy or marauder whatsoever.

Not long ago Malcolm Fowler, the Valley chronicler, and I were driving through the country on one of our historical forays and visitings to old churchyards when he told me about one Baldy Ryalls and his use of a silver bullet. We were just passing along beyond Buie's Creek and Malcolm gestured off to the left.

“There's a story connected with that place out there all right,” he said, “that little shack of a house out there.”

“I don't see any shack,” I said as I looked out across the rain-streaked field.

“Well, there was a shack there. Guess it's all gone now, but the thicket there by that hedgerow shows where it stood. Sarah McLean, an old Negro woman, told me about a happening there. Baldy Ryalls, a Negro, used to live there. One evening Baldy went down below the hill to feed his hogs, and while they were eating the corn and the mash out of the trough, up came a snow-white deer from the woods close by and began to eat the mash and

stuff away from the hogs. Baldy ran back to the house and got his old gun and came down and banged away at the deer. He was a dead shot, Baldy was, but he didn't hit that deer. She went on back into the woods like nothing had bothered her at all.

"The next evening when he came down and fed his hogs, the same thing happened. The white deer came up out of the woods, hopped over into the pen and began to eat the mash and slops away from the hogs as brash as you please. Baldy had brought his gun this time loaded with buckshot. So he banged away pime-blank at the deer. But he couldn't hit her. She went on back into the woods like nothing had happened.

"Well, Baldy was not to be outdone. He had heard handed down the belief and stories about the mystic power of anything that had silver in it. So that night he got out a silver dollar and melted it down and made himself a silver bullet. The next evening he was all prepared.

"He went down and fed his hogs and stood waiting behind a tree with his gun all loaded with the silver bullet. Sure enough, up came the deer snow-white and beautiful as ever out of the woods. She hopped over in the pen and began to eat the way she had done before. Then it was Baldy let her have it full blast with his silver bullet.

"But bless your life, he hardly noticed whether he hit the deer or not. For right after he fired off his gun at the deer and she had jooked crippled back into the wood and out of sight, he heard the most outdacious yowling and screeching going on up at the house behind him. The children came running out on the porch hollering for him to hurry and see what happened bad to Grandma.

"So he ran up to the house and into the room, and there lay Grandma on the floor writhing and twisting and screeching with pain. She had been shot clean through the leg and blood was pouring all out over the floor.

"Yes sir, Grandma was a hag, that's what she was — a witch woman," said Malcolm with finality, "and getting shot like that served her right."

"Then what happened to Grandma?" I asked.

"They say Baldy tended to her. After that she was a changed woman, and finally got to be sanctified, so they said, and went about healing sick people by the laying on of hands. Maybe she did, maybe she didn't. I don't know."

### *silver dime*

A coin especially good for health. I've known many a Negro in the Valley to take a dime, make a little hole in it, run a string through it and wear it around his neck as a sort of necklace. "Yessir, Mr. Paul, there's nothing better than a silver ten-cent piece to keep away all kinds of aches and pains."

### *silver dollar charm*

Old Webb Jones who lives down the road beyond Buie's Creek brags that



he hasn't been broke in thirty years. "I always got me some money," he burbles. And he has, for he carries a silver dollar in his mouth. He sleeps with it and eats with it there. Anytime you want him to he'll run it out on his tongue and show it to you. "'Sides not being broke," he says, "I got pertection too. Ain't no snake gonna bite me, no lightning strike me whilst I got my dollar in my mouth, for it's got God's name on it and says trust in him. And that's what I do, yassuh." See "protection against witches."

### *silverfish*

A mite that thrives on paper or starched clothes.

born with a *silver spoon* in one's mouth

### *"Silver Threads Among the Gold"*

This is another one of America's immortal songs. The words are by one Eben E. Rexford, an editor of a Wisconsin farm newspaper who wrote verses on the side. The music is by Hart Pease Danks, a composer of some ability and note. One day in reading Rexford's farm journal, Danks came across a poem that struck his fancy. He wrote to Rexford and bought it for three dollars. "Silver Threads Among the Gold." He sat down to his little pedal organ and soon had the melody completed. Danks was happily married and this had much to do with the deep feeling he put into his song. Some of the harsh critics called it over-sentimental, even saccharine, but the world didn't agree. The song soon swept around the globe. Over the years millions sang it and continue to sing it. It was always one of our choicest male quartet pieces in the Valley, along with "Sweet Genevieve," "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny," and "Sweet Adeline." It is not comforting to report that for all the "soul" Danks put in it, speaking his love for his wife, within a year he and she separated never to live together again. From then on for thirty years he led a solitary life and, according to the record as reported by Jack Burton in his *Tin Pan Alley* book, lived friendless and broke in a dingy Philadelphia rooming house until he died in 1903. On the floor near his body was a sheet of paper with the words scrawled on it — "It is hard to die alone."

"Darling, I am growing old.  
Silver threads among the gold  
Shine upon my brow today.  
Life is fading fast away.  
But, my darling, you will be  
Always young and fair to me.  
Yes, my darling, you will be  
Always young and fair to me.

“When your hair is silver white  
And your cheeks no longer bright,  
With the roses of the May  
I will kiss your lips and say,  
‘O my darling, mine alone, alone,  
You have never older grown.  
Yes, my darling, mine alone,  
You have never older grown.’”

*simlin (cymling)*

A squash, also a watch. “What time is it by your simlin?”

*simmer down*

To cool off, to calm down. “Hold on there, brother, you better simmer down a bit before you get someone riled up.”

*’simmon*

See “persimmon.”

*simoleon*

A dollar, a coin.

*simon pure*

Very pure.

*Simon Says*

A game once popular in the Valley. Any number of players can participate. The one selected as the leader sits in front of the others with his hands on the table and his thumbs sticking up. He says, “Simon says ‘Up,’” and all the other players follow the action of the leader. When he says, “Simon says ‘Down,’” he and the other players turn their thumbs down, and then when the leader says, “Simon says ‘Wigwag,’” all rock their hands back and forth on their thumbs. The game is played in different ways. When “Simon says ‘Wigwag,’” we children would wigwag our thumbs with a comic effect and everybody would break out laughing. And if the leader should give a command without first saying “Simon says,” then the players must not obey even though the leader performs the action he calls for. If a player makes a motion at the wrong time, he must pay a forfeit, most often going out of the game until only the single winner is left.

*simp*

A fool.

*simple simon*

A mentally retarded person.

*Simple Simon* met a pie man  
 Going to the fair.  
 Said Simple Simon to the pie man,  
 Let me taste your ware.'  
 (A nursery rhyme.)

*simples*

The mental feebles. A common saying is "He ought to be bored for the simples." Same as being bored for the hollow horn.

*Ann K. Simpson*

The famous murderess in the Valley. Her trial created a sensation and a book was published about it. It is very rare but in it one can read the amazingly learned speeches of the lawyers back in the early 19th century.

*Sin* has many tools, but a lie is a handle that fits them all.

Let him without *sin* cast the first stone.

The wages of *sin* is death.

*sin buster*

An evangelical preacher.

*since Adam was a pup*

A long time.

*since the Lord made me*

A phrase used for emphasis — common in the Valley. "I've never been so tired since the Lord made me."

*since who laid the rail*

From a long time back, much the same as a coon's age. "Lord, I haven't seen you since who laid the rail!"

*sinful seed*

The offspring of good parents who seem to be by nature evil. "Poor Mr. Nathan and Mis' Lucy. Who would have thought such good folks like them could have produced such sinful seed."

*sing*

To confess. "Give him a little of the third degree and he'll sing."

Birds of prey never *sing*.

A bird that can *sing* and won't *sing* ought to be made to *sing*.

If you *sing* in the summer, you may dance in the winter.

*Sing* a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye,  
Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie.  
When the pie was opened, the birds began to sing.  
Oh, wasn't that a purty dish to set before the king!

The king was in his counting house, counting out his money,  
The queen was in her parlor, eating bread and honey.  
The maid was in the garden, hanging out her clothes,  
'Long came a blackbird and nipped off her nose.  
(A nursery rhyme.)

*sing a different tune*

To recant, to talk differently. "Wait till his money runs out and he'll sing a different tune."

*Sing before breakfast*, you will cry before supper.

*a singing*

A get-together of people especially for hymn singing.

*every single day*

Used for emphasis. "Every single day that passes brings me nearer to going home."

*singlings*

A first run of moonshine liquor. After a double run the singlings become salable liquor.

*sings* like a bird

*sings* like a lark

He who *sings* drives away sorrow.

*Sink* or swim.

There is joy in heaven over one *sinner* that repenteth.

If *sinnors* entice thee, consent thou not.

The *sins* of the father shall be visited upon the children even unto the third generation.

Though thy *sins* be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

*Sister Superior*

The keeper of a brothel.

*sistern* (or *sistren*)

Sisters.

*Sit and take the load off your feet.*

Visit awhile.

*a-sit*

Seated. "There he was a-sit on the fence."

*sit in one's bones*

To sit naked. "It's just so hot I'm gonna sit in my bones."

*to sit on one's hands*

To be idle, lazy.

*to sit on one's tongue*

To be tactful, restrained in one's remarks.

*sitting duck*

An easy target, one in a helpless situation.

*sitting on the lid*

To be hindering or preventing something from coming to fulfillment.

*sitting pretty*

In fine shape.

*sit up and take notice*

Listen, become aware, pay attention to.

*sive*

Scythe.

*Six* feet of earth makes all men equal.

*six* of one and half dozen of the other

at *sixes* and sevens

*same old sixes and sevens*

The usual thing, a tiresome repetition.

A nimble *sixpence* is better than a slow shilling.

*sixth sense*

See "extrasensory perception."

*the size of it*

The truth of it, an accurate account. "That's about the size of it," said the lawyer as he summed up.

*to size up*

To appraise, to characterize.

*sizzle-sozzle*

A good and slow-soaking rain. "Oh, Lord," said Rev. Willie Duke, "send us some rain. We need it bad, but don't send a gully-washer, send us a good sizzle-sozzle."

*a good skate*

A fine fellow.

*to skate on thin ice*

To act with much risk.

*skedaddle*

To run in a hurry, to flee.

*skeer*

Scare.

*skeet*

To skip or bounce or skate. "See if you can make your rock skeet across the water in three bounces. I just did it."

To flee. "Man, did I skeet from there."

*skeeter*

Mosquito.

*skeleton in the closet*

A hid-away or secret guilt.

*skelp*

A mark, a cut, a surveyor's term. "If you find the old skelp on the tree, you'll know that's where the line is."

*skew around*

To adjust, change position. "Skew your chair around a bit, I'm a little deaf in that ear."

*skiddish*

Skittish.

*skid poles*

Peeled horizontal poles at the green end of a sawmill for skidding the outside bark strips off into a pile for hauling or burning.

*put the skids under*

To take away one's support, to get rid of a person.

*Skill* and patience will succeed where force fails.

*skim*

To chunk rocks on the top of a stretch of water. We boys used to try this and test our skill, each one seeking out a thin, flat little stone with which to try his skill. "See, can you skim that rock clean across the pond." Same as skip or skeet.

*skimp*

To act stingy. "Don't skimp the children on that milk."

*skimption*

A little bit, a small amount. "He trimmed it a skimption more and then it fitted."

*skimpy*

Stingy, small amount, lacking.

*skin*

To cheat, to rob, to leave one bankrupt. "In that land trade he really skinned me."

To whip, to spank severely. "If you don't behave, boy, I'll skin you alive."

to *skin* a flea for his hide and tallow

A wrinkled *skin* conceals the scars.

by the *skin* of his teeth

*skin and bones*

A very emaciated person.

*skinflint*

One so stingy he'd skin a flint, a miser.

as *skinny* as a rail

*no skin off one's nose*

Not one's business, not one's responsibility.

*skin one's eye*

To look sharply about, to be on the alert.

*skins*

Greenback bills.

*skip*

To disregard, to run away, said of one who evades the law. "He skipped bail and the NAACP had to pay it."

To miss, to overlook, to omit. "You skipped me, Miss Alice, when you called the roll."

*skip it*

Forget it, let it pass, don't notice it.

*skippers*

Bugs that infest meat, especially hog hams. "The dang skippers got into my meat and nigh 'bout ruined it — I salted it and salted it."

*Skipping the Rope (Jumping Rope)*

This game can be played by one child with his own hooping-over rope under his lifted feet or by two or three jumpers — with the rope (we children usually used a bullace vine since ropes were not too available for such using) held at each end by two players. These two would swing the "rope" over and the others would skip (jump) as it swept under their feet. If one skipper's feet were tardy, he or she could drop out and the game continue till the last one's feet got caught. Then the swingers and jumpers would exchange places. Some sort of chanted rhymes usually went with the game, the swingers doing the reciting, such as—

"Down by the river, down by the sea  
Johnny broke a bottle and blamed it on me.  
"I told Ma and Ma told Pa,  
And Johnny got a whipping — ha ha ha."

Another rhyme we recited as we played was—

"Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold,  
Peas porridge in the pot nine days old,  
Some like it hot, some like it cold,  
Some like it in the pot nine days old."

And then one of the swingers or players might call out, "Hot pepper!" And the rope would be speeded up till the jumpers fell out. The one who lasted longest or reached one hundred skips first could be called a winner. One thing I learned from this game and that was that girls always were better jumpers than boys. I still wonder why.

*skips one's mind*

To forget.

*"Skip to My Lou"*

A play-party song and popular in the Valley as elsewhere. I have used it to good effect in a scene in the play "Texas." Vance Randolph in his *Ozark Folksongs* says it is the most popular of all play-party pieces. Maybe so. Its nonsense verses and merry tune make frivolity and cutting up easier to indulge in. No doubt of that.



“Flies in the buttermilk two by two,  
 Flies in the buttermilk two by two,  
 Flies in the buttermilk two by two,  
 Skip to my Lou my darling.”

And then on and on with

“Chicken in the bread tray, scratching out dough,”

“Rabbit in the briarpatch, shoo, shoo, shoo,”

“Hair in the butter, six foot-two,”

“Can’t get a fat girl, a skinny one’ll do,”

and so on. In the ribald old careless days we often sang this verse as

“Can’t get a white girl, a nigger’ll do.”

*skirt*

A girl or woman. “The soldiers would line up in front of the guardhouse just to watch the skirts go by.”

*skitterbrained*

Scatterbrained.

*skittish* as a colt

*skoy duck*

Decoy duck, same as 'coy duck. In all my boyhood days I never heard the term decoy, only skoy or coy.

*skum*

Past tense of skim.

*skun*

Past tense of skin.

Let each man skin his own *skunk*.

*skunk (skonk)*

A low-down person.

To shut out, same as whitewash, to keep an opponent from scoring. “In the ball game yesterday Lillington skunked Angier 6-0.”

A *skunk* sat on a rotting stump.  
 The stump said the skunk stunk.  
 The skunk said the stump stunk.  
 Which stunk — the skunk or the stump?  
 (A tongue twister.)

*skunk cabbage*

Sometimes called swamp cabbage as well as polecat weed. This plant grows in swamps and low wet grounds in the Valley. The roots and tubers are supposed to be a narcotic and stimulant and, when dried or powdered, are a good remedy for asthma, catarrh, chronic coughs, dropsy, rheumatism and whatnot. Sometimes a salve made from the roots was used for ringworm and inflammatory rheumatism.

When the *sky* falls, we shall all catch larks.

*skylark*

A boisterous party or escapade.

*sky pilot*

A preacher.

*sky rocket*

A kind of firecracker used at Christmastime in the Valley.

The *sky's* the limit.

*slack off (up)*

To become less, to ease up. "The rain is slacking off, and I reckon we can go back to work."

*keep up the slack*

To keep close attention to one's work, to stay right on the job.

*slack talk*

Sassy talk or idle gossip.

*slack water*

A time of dull business, a low water time when millgrinding is curtailed.

*slain in the spirit*

One who passes out under the hypnotic influence of the healer. Child preachers seem to be most effective in getting sinners "slain in the spirit."

*slam*

Entirely, completely, absolutely. "My fodder's burning up and I'm worked slam to death."

*to slam*

To condemn, to berate.

*slanchindicular*

Sloping, slanting, diagonally, out of line.

*slap*

Exactly, directly at, in the main, completely. "And then Bonie hit that third pitch slap over the right field fence."

*slapdash*

Careless, slovenly, topsy-turvy.

*slap-happy*

Goofy, punch-drunk.

*Slapjack*

A card game.

*Slap Out*

A young people's game. The players stand in a ring facing inward, and the chosen one runs around and slaps another player on the back or on the shoulder. This player turns and chases the first one. Usually it is a boy and girl game, and the one that is caught gets a kiss.

*slash*

Woods, swamp where slash pines grow. "There's some mighty big trees down in the slash."

*slashing*

Fine, handsome, high-stepping, strapping. "Lord, Hardy Gilchrist has got him a slashing fine woman in that Rhoda girl."

*slashings*

Many, a great deal, a multitude. "There were slashings of people at the fair in Raleigh Friday."

*slat, slats*

An extremely thin tall person.

*slat-bonnet*

Same as a sunbonnet. My sisters used to make their bonnets like everybody else in the Valley — by inserting strips of pasteboard for a lining, and this kept the bonnet stiff and in shape.

*slaunchways*

Diagonally, awry. Much the same as slanchindicular or slaunchwise.

*slave driver*

A hard boss or eager beaver.

*slay*

To tickle or amuse extravagantly. "Will Rogers just slays me."

*sleep*

Sleepiness. “Get that sleep out’n them eyes, boy, for day’s done broke and it’s time we was on our way to work.”

A whitish discharge in the corner of the eye, usually in the morning.

Nature needs but five  
Custom gives men seven.  
Laziness takes nine,  
And weakness takes eleven.  
(Wisdom rhyme.)

*Sleep* on now and take your rest.

One hour’s *sleep* before midnight is worth two after.

*sleepers*

A crossbeam, usually a timber to which the floor of a building is nailed.

An unnoticed person, a spy. Also an unexpected action or person.

Let *sleeping* dogs lie.

There will be *sleeping* enough in the grave.

The *sleeping* fox catches no poultry.

as *sleepless* as an owl

*sleep-rocking woman*

A woman especially adept at making love.

*sleeps* like a log

*sleeps* like a rock

*to sleep with*

To have sexual intercourse.

*sleep with Missus Green*

To sleep or camp at night in the open air.

*sleeveholders*

Elastic garter-like bands used around the upper part of the arms to hold the sleeves up, to keep the cuffs from pushing out too far. This used to be a must in men’s Sunday dress.

*sleigh riding*

An activity that used to be joyous indeed during some of the rare snows in the Valley. We never did have an actual sleigh and we would often make a sled by using 2 x 4 scantlings for runners and then nailing planks across

them and hitching one or two mules to our sled and go riding down the road. And how disappointed we were to see the snow melt so soon as it always did.

*slew (slue)*

To move or adjust one's position. "Slew your chair a bit, son, and give me some room."

Many, a crowd, a whole lot. "There was a great slew of people at the turkey shooting."

*slews*

A great amount, a great many. "He drinks slews of brandy every night."

A *slice* from a cut loaf is never missed.

*slice of life*

A piece of realism, realistic interpretation especially in literature.

*slick*

A muddy place, an oily spot in a highway or on the sea. "He must have been running 100 miles an hour for when his car hit that slick, it whirled around and went sailing through the air like a winding blade, killed both him and the girl."

Clever, wily, usually in a derogatory sense.

A fine appearance. "My, you look slick and handsome in that new suit."

*slick* enough to catch a weasel asleep

as *slick* as a button

as *slick* as a duck's back

as *slick* as a greased log

as *slick* as a greased pig

as *slick* as an eel

as *slick* as an eel and twice as nasty

as *slick* as an otter slide

as *slick* as a peeled onion

as *slick* as a soapmaker's ass

as *slick* as a whistle

as *slick* as a wink

as *slick* as glass

as *slick* as ice

as *slick* as marble

as *slick* as snot

*slickenslide*

Slick and slide, steep, very sloping. Also descriptive of one's walking on ice or a sleety pathway.

*slick up*

To dress up, to put on one's best clothes.

*slide*

A sled.

*slide board*

A short piece of plank we children used to use to slide on any steep hill we could find. And the steep hills in the Valley were very rare. We used to walk miles to one that lay along the creek bank toward Buie's Creek.

*sliding hill*

Any steep hillside where we children could ride on our slide board.

*to slim*

To take off weight, diet.

*slim pickings*

Poor profit.

*sling the bat*

To act irresponsibly, hurtfully, uncaringly of others.

the *slings* and arrows of outrageous fortune

*a slink*

A coward.

*slinky*

Sneaky, furtive, stealthy.

*slip*

A faux pas. Also a woman's underdress.

There's many a *slip*

Twixt the cup and the lip.

Every *slip* is not a fall.

*to slip*

To age, to grow discouraged, become less effective. "I saw John Oxendine

last week, and I'm sorry to say he's slipping."

To forget. "I meant to get some bacon, but it slipped my mind."

*slip across*

To hoodwink, to use cheating methods. "Yessir, I've known that Bennie Oakley to trim the hog shoulders to look like hams and slip 'em across on his customers for hams — yeh, many-a time."

*slip baby*

A baby begot by mistake.

*slipgap*

A gap in a worm fence made by lowering some of the rails from the top.

*slip off*

To steal away quietly.

*slipper-slide*

A shoehorn.

*slippery*

Unreliable, clever in an unsavory way. "He's a slippery character all right and you'll have to watch him."

as *slippery* as an eel

as *slippery* as ice

*slippery elm*

The bark of the slippery elm tree which baseball pitchers used to chew for throwing spit balls. Such balls are now outlawed in the game.

*slip up*

To make an error, bad judgment, or the mistake itself.

*slit*

The female pudendum.

*Sloan's Liniment*

A powerful stinging liniment, once popular in the Valley for treating rheumatism, aches and pains.

*slobber*

Silly garrulous talk.

*slobber chops*

The jaws.

A thimbleful of water fed to a baby will stop its *slobbering* (dribbling saliva).

*slob-gullet*

A coarse, disgusting fellow.

*slog*

To punish, to hit hard, to thrash. Also to walk heavily as in snow or mud.  
“He slogged on and on and then, thank the lord, he saw a house.”

*sloop (slurp)*

A noise often made by a person with bad table manners when drinking soup or coffee.

*sloosh (slooshings)*

A great many, much. “He’s got a whole sloosh of children.” Same as murgins or a slew.

*slop pail*

A bucket or pail usually used with the washstand in houses not fitted with plumbing. Often identified with the chamber pot or mug.

*slouch*

A sorry, raggle-taggle person.

*Slow* and steady wins the race.

as *slow* as a snail

as *slow* as Christmas

as *slow* as cold molasses

as *slow* as death

as *slow* as molasses in January

as *slow* as molasses running uphill in a freeze

as *slow* as pulling eyeteeth

as *slow* as the itch

*slow-joe*

A lazy, slow-working person, same as slowpoke.

*slubber*

To mess up, to half-do, to peck at. “You children quit slubbing your cotton.”

*slud*

Past tense of slide. “Like Dizzy Dean said, ‘I quit playing baseball in the cow pasture after one day when I slud into what I thought was third base.’ ”



*sludgehammer*

Sledgehammer.

*sluff*

To shed, to get rid of. "See there — that snake sluffed his skin right in your closet."

*slug*

A dram, a drink of whiskey, same as a shot. A slug of whiskey usually is a large drink.

*sluice*

The big trough that carries water to or from a gristmill, waterwheel or turbine.

*slumgullion*

Hash, mixture of odds and ends, stew.

*slunch*

To slant.

*slush pot*

The fund set up to reward politicoes for their efforts in the party cause or in the cause of certain candidates.

as *sly* as a fox

*smack*

Exactly, right on the dot, plumb in the middle of, used for emphasis. "He fired off the b-b gun and hit the other boy smack in the eye."

A kiss.

*smack dab*

Right on the target.

*smacker*

A piece of money. "He offered me five hundred smackers, but I still said no."

as *small* as a minute

as *small* as a redbug

as *small* as the head of a pin

There's nothing too *small* to use.

*small fry*

Children, little folks.

*small grain*

Oats, rye, wheat as contrasted with corn, soybeans and so on.

*small hours*

The late hours before dawn. "It's in the small hours I can't sleep."

*small potatoes*

Small matters, unimportant things or people.

*Small rain* lays great dust.

*smart*

Of good behavior. "You boys be smart while you're visiting Uncle John."

A *smart* boy makes a lazy man.

as *smart* as a cricket

as *smart* as a dollar

as *smart* as a pin

*smart aleck*

A know-it-all, an offensively smart individual.

*smart aleck rhymes*

What's your name?  
Puddin' and tane (tame).  
Ask me again  
And I'll tell you the same.

What's your name?  
Puddin' and tane.  
Look up the black dog's ass  
And you'll see the same.

*smart cookie*

A clever person. "You can say what you please, but Dr. Sam is a smart cookie."

*smartweed*

Sometimes known as water pepper. It grows in the wet places throughout the Valley and even thrives in water itself. It has medicinal uses, being good for toothache, coughs, colds, milk sickness and even bowel complaints.

*smash-baggage*

Handler of freight or trunks and all sorts of baggage, used mainly as a noun. "Then here come old smash-baggage with a suitcase spilling all over the yard."

If *smell* were all, the goat would win.

*smell a rat*

To be suspicious, wary, watchful.

*smellers*

Cats' whiskers.

*smells* like a skunk

*smidges*

Smudges.

*smidgin*

A little bit, a crumb. "That fellow had just a smidgin of learnin' but it was enough in the old days for him to be a schoolteacher."

If a baby *smiles* in his sleep, he is talking to the angels.

*smithers*

Fragments, pieces. "He got mad and broke her flowerpot all to smithers."

*smokalotive*

Locomotive.

*smoke*

To suffer, to receive rough treatment. "When them cops got hold of him, they really made him smoke."

Speed. "Old Bob Feller could really smoke that ball by you."

*smoke* at one end and a fool at the other

*Smoke* from burning leaves was supposed to be good for asthma.

*Smoke* from burning newground timbers will bring rain.

*Smoke* going straight up presages rain.

It's better to *smoke* here than hereafter.

Where there's *smoke* there's bound to be fire.

No *smoke* without some fire.

*smoke out*

To ferret out.

*smokestack*

An excessive cigarette smoker. "We've got three smokestacks coming, so you better have your water hose available for fire."

*smoking*

A wound can be treated by burning a rag in a bucket and putting the wounded foot or hand over it.

*smoking stick*

Indian term for a gun.

*smole*

Past tense of smile.

*smooch*

To kiss sloppily.

as *smooth* as a billiard ball

as *smooth* as a floor

as *smooth* as a millpond

as *smooth* as ice

as *smooth* as satin

as *smooth* as silk

*smooth out the humps*

To drive so fast that the humps in the road seem smoothed out.

*smooth sailing*

Easy goings, out of difficulty.

*Smooth* waters run deep.

*smother up*

To hush up, to cover up.

*smut*

Dirty talk or print.

*smutty*

Obscene, vulgar.

*snack*

A small meal, a hurried meal.

Old Broadhuss told his little wife Polly he had to go to Fayetteville and he wanted her to cook him up a "snack." So she cooked him up a bushel of meal and eleven hogsheads, and when she dragged it out to him in a sack, he roared out at her and said, "Lord, God, woman, is this what you call a snack?!" So as the story went, he sat there, ate everything up, cleaned off the bones and threw them at the house and broke a hole in the weather-

boarding and then drove off. See "Broadhuss."

*snafu*

Situation normal, all fucked up. In politer terms it is usually spoken of as "Situation normal, all fouled up."

*snag*

To catch, to get hold of. "If I could only snag a good idea for my play, I would be a lot happier."

*snaggle-tooth*

An old low-down woman or man.

*snake*

To drag or haul. "I want you boys to get up early and get down in the swamp and start snaking them logs." When I was a boy, all of our logs were snaked by great steers.

A low-down fellow.

Kill the *snake* and not scotch it.

*Snake* baked a hoecake  
And set the frog to mindin'.  
Frog went to sleep  
And lizard come and found him.  
(Recitation rhyme.)

no more than a *snake* can straddle a log

To hang a dead *snake* with its belly up in a tree helps to bring rain.

*snakebite cure*

At once drink a lot of tea made from the snakeroot plant. This never fails, so the old folks used to tell me. But in all my travelings up and down the Valley, I never met a person who had been snakebitten and so cured.

*snake doctor*

The dragonfly.

*snake eyes*

An unlucky throw of the dice in which a two results, that is, a single spot on each die.

*snake fence*

The same as worm fence. See "rail fence."

*snake grabs*

Steel grabs which fasten to the end of a log for snaking it out.

*snake in the grass*

A traitor, a disloyal person pretending loyalty, a malicious hypocrite.

*Snake in the Grass (Gully)*

This is the same game as Jack in the Bush except that the question asked goes as follows:

“Snake in the grass  
Bust his head.  
How many licks?”

And the guess goes on as in Jack in the Bush.

*snake poison*

Strong whiskey.

*snakeroot*

Sometimes called Sampson’s snakeroot. There’s a common belief that the Virginia variety, which also grows in the Valley, is especially good for increasing man’s sexual powers. I know of one case where the man and his wife were married several years and snakeroot was recommended by an old neighbor. The man ate great quantities of it. In fact, he said, “I’ve et so much of that stuff I plumb foam at the mouth.” Anyway, his wife had twins born to her, and so they never get tired of recommending this to their friends. Tea made from this snakeroot is supposed to dry poison out of the body after a snakebite. Perhaps this is the reason it is called snakeroot. Some of the old people still recommend dry powdered leaves mixed with tobacco snuff and thickened into a paste with water as especially good for bee and wasp stings. Old Candiss McLean used to make a powder out of the root and snuff it up her nose to relieve her headache. She said it did her “a power of good.” Perhaps it did for it is supposed to have the drug reserpine in it. It was also recommended not only for snakebites but for high blood pressure and mental illness. It was supposed to have a tranquilizing effect. The *Liatris* plant is also called button snakeweed but as to its powers, I know not.

*snakes*

According to some common Valley beliefs, snakes are supposed to go into barns and milk cows and when snakes are killed, their tails are supposed to wriggle until sundown. It was also a common belief among us boys that if a snake were thrown into the fire, the feet would show themselves as the snake burned up. Although most people seem to have a horror of snakes, this feeling does not always extend to the animal and bird kingdom. Sometime ago I went down to the pond back of my house where I had an overturned boat lying on the bank. I decided to go fishing and turned the

boat over, and there sat a duck on her nest and two large water moccasins snug up close to her. She made no move but the snakes wiggled off in a hurry into the pond. See "pet snake."

Delirium tremens.

Don't stir up more *snakes* than you can kill.

*snakes' whiskers*

Liriope, a popular border planting.

*snaky*

Mean, treacherous.

*snap*

A matter of little concern. "I don't give a snap what you think, I'm going on and do it just the same."

A brief season of weather. "The Farmers' Almanac says there'll be a cold snap about the first of the month."

An easy job, a sinecure. "He's got a snap down there at the powerhouse."

*snap in her garter*

A woman with strong sex appeal. "When you read that book *Ulysses* you'll find that Mollie Bloom sure has a snap in her garter."

*snap judgment*

Hasty judgment, decision based on momentary concern.

*snap of a finger*

A minute, unimportant action. "I wouldn't give the snap of a finger for his word."

If a *snapping* turtle bites, he will not let go till it thunders.

*snaps*

String beans that are broken in pieces for cooking.

*snazzy*

Foppish, of fine dress, appearance.

*sneakers*

Special kind of rubber-soled, pliable, often canvas shoes.

*a sneeze blessing*

A protection against bad luck is to say after a sneeze, "God bless you."

According to my friend Mr. Mac, the miller, this got started way back when the first Mac of Barra far away in Scotland was alive. A great epidemic of sneezing overran the world and folks found out finally that by praying

they could get relief, and their asking God's blessing was the most effectual prayer of all. So the custom began, according to Mr. Mac.

Also in the act of sneezing one's mouth is open and if someone quickly says, "God bless you," this will keep the devil from darting into the mouth and taking possession of the unlucky soul.

*sneezeweed*

Sometimes called the swamp sunflower. It grows abundantly in the Valley and according to some authorities the reason it is called "sneezeweed" is that if the leaves are dried and beaten into a powder and snuffed, they cause violent sneezing. It is believed that it's poisonous to cattle and sheep. The Indians were reported to have used it for snuffing up their noses.

*snide*

Cutting, vicious, berating. "After that snide remark you don't expect me to like you, do you?"

*snifter*

A dram of liquor. "Every morning he'd take a snifter before he went out to work."

*snipe hunt*

A hoax. See "holding the bag."

*snippy*

Sharp-tongued, also proud. Cold or biting as applied to the weather.

*snitch*

To tattle-tale, to let out a secret, also to steal. "While Betsy and I were in the theatre, someone snitched her camera from the cloakroom."

*snits*

Bursts, bits, pieces. "Now and then he had snits of rage."

*snits and dumplings*

A choice dish of dried fruit cooked with ham bones, then with dumplings added.

*snollygoster*

A wild outpouring, a deluge of rain.

*snort*

A drink, same as snifter.

*snorter*

Anything fierce or furious as a storm.

*snot*

Obscene talk.



*snot rag*

Handkerchief.

*snotty*

Stuck-up, over-prideful, disdainful.

*snotty-nosed*

Dirty, low-down. "And then in come old snotty-nosed Archie with his cap off for a handout."

*snout*

The nose.

*snow*

Happy dust, cocaine.

*Snow* is the poor man's fertilizer.

*snowball*

A shrub that is very popular with the housewives in the Valley, and in the yards of more homes than not you can see the great white blooms in midsummer. Putting old plough points at the root of the bush will produce blue flowers, so I am told.

To increase rapidly, usually of its own strength. "The idea of a memorial for Brenda Holland has snowballed through the state."

He's got about as much chance as a *snowball* in hell.

He won't last much longer than a *snowball* in hell.

*snowbird*

An addict to cocaine or happy dust, a drug addict.

*snow under*

To overwhelm, overload with duties. "Yesterday I saw Kermit and he said he was just snowed under with these outdoor dramas."

*snuck*

Past tense of sneak.

*snuff*

A preparation of pulverized tobacco for inhaling or tucking against the gums. Dental Mild Scotch Snuff, Tuberose Society Square, Rainbow Sweet Snuff, Peach Star, Dixie, Naby, Society Square and Railroad Mills were some of the popular brands.

*up to snuff*

Equal to the occasion, also in good health.

*snuff box*

Declivity on top of one's hand between the forefinger and thumb where gentlemen used to put snuff to sniff.

*snuffles*

Snuffles, a bad cold.

*snuff mop*

The chewed end of a black gum twig, usually for dipping snuff.

as *snug* as a bug in a rug

*snurly*

Gnarly. "That piece of plank is all snurly and we can't use it."

*snuzzle*

To cuddle.

*So* near and yet *so* far.

*soak*

To cheat, to penalize, overcharge. "We traded cars and he sure did soak me."

A hard drinker.

*soapmaking*

In the old days the Valley housewife made her own soap.

I remember my mother used to make soap in the washpot. She would put in a lot of the trimmings of the pork and boiled pieces of meat of all sorts, have a fire built around the pot and, after cooking these for a good long while, add lye and other ingredients. Then after it had boiled down to a rather thick soupy mixture she would let it cool, and after several hours the top part of the mixture would harden somewhat, sometimes to the thickness of three or four inches. Underneath that would be the liquid leavings. She would then cut the soap out with a knife much as you cut pieces of pie, and we used it for all sorts of cleanings. How pleased we were when we would get a piece of store-bought soap in place of old homemade stuff.

There are many beliefs connected with soapmaking, among them the following: If homemade soap is to be solid, only one person must stir it and always in the same direction. To reverse the stroke of the stirring stick is to prevent the solution from congealing no matter how long it cooks or what additional ingredients are put in it. A sassafras stick should be used for stirring and always in one direction. Another belief is to stir as the sun turns. Otherwise the ingredients will not mix and the soap will not do well. The same was thought to be true of cake batter.

If you make soap while the moon is waning, the soap will dry up. So make soap on the increase of the moon. Others say that the fat meat and

lye will come to the proper congealing in the full of the moon.

If a man calls on you while you are making soap, get him to stir the soap ingredients and it will improve the quality. It is bad luck for a woman to call on you while you are making soap. The same is not true of a man.

I found an old recipe for homemade soap as follows — a proper mixture of hickory ashes, lye, grease, skins, pieces of fat sidemeat, hog ears, the feet, and so on. Boil and keep boiling until they are completely dissolved, and then let the mixture cool off and you will have good soap.

*no soap*

No result, action. "I kept calling for help but no soap."

*so as*

So that.

*s.o.b.*

Abbreviation for son of a bitch.

*sobbing*

Soggy, soaked. How often, when my father would come in from the rain, have I heard my mother say, "I bet your feet are sobbing wet, Billy." Sometimes she would say "sogging."

*sobby*

Soggy.

*sob sister*

A sentimental woman writer, especially a newspaper reporter who writes tear-jerking sob stuff.

*sock*

To hit with one's fist.

*sockdologer*

An extraordinary thing or happening, something impressive, a knockout.

*sock into*

To fit into. "Let the j'ist sock into the corner there."

*soda*

Soda (sodium carbonate) is a good home remedy. Mixed with water it makes a gargle for the sore throat, and also wet soda put on a burn will take the hurt out.

*sod-drunk*

Completely drunk.

*A soft answer turneth away wrath.*

*Soft* words break no bones.

as *soft* as cushion

as *soft* as dew

as *soft* as down

as *soft* as falling snow

as *soft* as mush

as *soft* as nightfall

as *soft* as putty

Mash on the *soft* pedal when you're dealing with folks.

*soft berth*

Easy street, an easy job.

*soft sawder*

Flattery.

*soft shit*

A disgustingly sentimental person, also flattery.

*soft-soap*

Unctuous flattery.

*soft spot*

A kind of feeling in one's heart. Also the spot on top of a baby's head before the bones of the skull have grown together.

Be bare with the *soil* and the *soil* will be bare with you.

*S O L*

Shit out of luck.

*to soldier*

To loaf or to laze on the job.

*sold on*

To be in complete support of, backing a thing fully, or converted to a point of view.

as *solemn* as an owl

*solid*

Used for emphasis, all, entire. "He was there a solid month."

Reliable, honest. "That Joe Matthews is a solid fellow."

as *solid* as a brick

as *solid* as a dollar

as *solid* as a rock

as *solid* as Gibraltar

### *Solid South*

The old Confederacy.

### *Solomon's seal*

A decorative little spring flower. The small blossoms which appear in April and May grow in clusters or singly on a flower stalk. The root chewed and swallowed was supposed to be a good cure for snakebites.

### *some account*

Worth preserving. "That piece of lumber is some account and you orter save it."

### *some kind of*

Much, a great deal. "Man, that was some kind of rain last night."

### *something*

An especial thing, or extraordinary person or happening. "He's something, that fellow!"

Better *something* than nothing.

### *something for the birds*

Nonsense, froth, piffle.

### *something on a person*

To have a person in one's power or have some shameful secret which can be used for bribery purposes. "You've got nothing on me and I'm not afraid to oppose you."

### *something on a stick*

A wonderful person, a fine thing.

### *sometime*

Undependable, occasional, "a sometime friend."

### *sometimey*

Fickle, unreliable. "She's a sometimey girl."

A wise *son* maketh a glad father, but a foolish *son* is the heaviness of his mother.

### *song and dance*

A hard luck story. Also any wordy unconvincing explanation of whys and wherefores.

*sonny*

A familiar term for a boy.

*son of a bitch*

An excessively derogatory term, usually resulting in a fight.

*son of a gun*

A milder form of son of a bitch, often used affectionately. "Why, you old son of a gun, you're a sight for sore eyes."

The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the *Son of Man* hath nowhere to lay his head.

My *son's* my son till he's got him a wife.

My daughter's my daughter all the days of her life.

*Sons of Liberty*

A band of patriots in the lower part of the Valley who successfully but peacefully opposed the British Stamp Act as the then Governor Tryon tried to impose it.

*Sons of Temperance*

A secret order which began in the Valley about the middle of the 19th century and spread to several parts of the State. In the State Archives is a little booklet of some sixteen pages giving the constitution and bylaws of "Division No. 157" in Cumberland County. Many a man of the bottle received salvation from this society. But interest waned and by 1900 the society was pretty much dead.

*sont*

Sent.

*sooey*

A command used to drive hogs away.

*sook*

A call to hogs or cows to come for their food.

*sooky*

A name given a cow or a sow.

*Soon* gotten, *soon* spent.

*Soon* hot, *soon* cold.

*Soon* learned, *soon* forgotten.

*Soon* ripe, *soon* rotten.

Well enough is *soon* enough.

*soon bug*

June bug.

No *sooner* said than done.

*soon start*

An early start. "You better get to sleep, boy, because we've got to get a soon start in the morning."

*soople*

Supple, limber.

*soot*

It was pronounced "sut," and was especially good for stopping bleeding.

*sop*

Gravy, also a bribe, a pacifier.

*soption*

Gravy, sauce.

*sore* as a boil

*sore eyes*

There are many old folk cures for sore eyes. One I remember when I was a boy and that was rain water. Several washings of the eyes with rain water was supposed to be a cure. Also one's urine was recommended.

*sore on the tongue*

This is supposed to be evidence that the person has been lying.

*sores in the mouth*

These were proof that one had been lying or else using profanity or dirty words.

*sore-tailed*

Over-sensitive to insults, high-tempered.

*sore-tailed cat*

An ill-tempered person.

It is a *sorry* house in which the cock is silent and the hen crows.

*sorter*

Sort of.

*sortered*

Soldered.

*sot*

Sat.

Who weds a *sot*  
To get his cot  
Will lose his cot  
And keep the sot.

*a sot drunkard*  
An excessively debauched drinker.

*sot in his (her) ways*  
Habit-bound.

*soul*  
A spiritual entity, supposed to be separate from and existing after the death of the body. So goes the belief in the Cape Fear Valley and, for that part, throughout much of the world.

The *soul* is not where it lives but where it loves.

What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own *soul*.

Of the *soul* the body form doth take.

*soul stuff*  
The spiritual essence of a person.

as *sound* as a dollar  
Reliable.

as *sound* as a fiddle

as *sound* as a lightwood knot

*sound off*  
To brag and to boast.

*sound one's horn*  
Also to brag, boast.

*soup*  
Fog.

Let every man blow his own *soup*.

as easy as drinking *soup* out of a sluice

*in the soup*  
To be in difficulty or to be adrift in the sea.

*souped up*  
Unnaturally energized.



*soupy*

Over-sentimental.

as *sour* as a crabapple

as *sour* as a green 'simmon

as *sour* as a pickle

*sour as wig*

Very sour indeed.

This was a common term of comparison in the Valley when I was a child, and only in late years have I learned that wig was an old Scotch term that referred to the soured milk substance that formed on the top of the milk which had almost turned to whey.

*sour grapes*

An attitude, usually of feigned nonchalance, adopted after one has failed in one's desire. "Sour grapes," as the fox said when he could not reach them.

*sourpuss*

A sour-visaged person.

*sour stomach*

A common affliction in the old days. There were multitudes of patent medicine cures for it. One recently I have seen on television is Bisodol. It is highly recommended by the sour looking person who peers out at night from the television.

*"Sourwood Mountain"*

A popular play-party and dancing piece. It was a favorite of Tim Messer and Sam Davis, one with his fiddle and the other with his banjo, with their voices lifted in a two-part harmony now and then as they played. See "crying shame."

"Roosters a-crowing on Sourwood Mountain,  
Hi oh diddle dum dee ay,  
Call up your dogs and le's go hunting,  
Hi oh diddle dum dee ay.

"My little girl lives in the hollow—  
She won't come and I won't follow—.

"Geese in the pond and ducks in the ocean—  
Devil's in women when they take a notion—.

"My little girl's a blue-eyed daisy—  
If I don't get her, I'll go crazy—."

*soused*

Dead drunk.

*souse meat*

A concoction made from boiled pigs' feet, ears, noses and tails, and seasoned with sage, pepper and salt. Put away in jars, this has for generations been a popular dish in the Valley.

*Southern cooking*

A highly over-rated type of cooking.

*Southern rape*

A common accusation against Southern Negro criminals. Many an innocent man has gone to the electric chair or the gas chamber accused by some hysterical woman. Just recently a Negro in Raleigh was freed from a life term sentence which he was thankful to get, so close was his brush with the gas chamber. Recently another Negro confessed to the crime and the so-called rapee, who had identified the unfortunate man in the first place, came forward, and, on comparing him with the other man, fainted away. Little good did the fainting do the one who had started serving a life sentence, but the State of North Carolina pardoned him and he walks the earth a free man today. "I've got no hard feelings against anybody," he said.

*Southern womanhood*

According to one interpreter of Southern thinking, the Southern woman was "the lily-pure maid of Astolat and the hunting goddess of the Boeotian hill. There was hardly a sermon that did not begin and end with tributes in her honor, hardly a brave speech that did not open and close with the clashing of shields and the flourishing of swords for her glory." And one of the fraternity toasts in a certain university ran: "To woman, lovely woman of the Southland, as pure and chaste as this sparkling water, as cold as this gleaming ice, we lift this cup, and we pledge our hearts and lives to the protection of her virtue and chastity."

Ingraham Blue was a true Southerner in his feeling for his sister Irene. They were from the proud family of Blues that lived near Elizabethtown. Ingraham was a hot-tempered fellow like a lot of young Southerners. Standing on the street corner in Elizabethtown one day, he saw his sister Irene ride up sidesaddle on her big bay mare. She stopped at one of the hitching posts and started to get off. Somehow her foot slipped in the stirrup and she fell. Now it happened that one of Tavis Edwards' Negroes was standing by — a big strapping mulatto he was — and when Irene started falling, he instinctively sprang forward and caught her in his arms, to help her. Old Gregg Hassell, who told me the story, said he was standing there and saw it all. The Negro's hand, in the hurry of the moment, slid up Irene's

leg where maybe it oughtn't to, and what did Ingraham do? Standing where he was across the street, he pulled out his pistol, leveled it on his arm and shot the Negro dead. Of course, there was a lot of turmoil about it — not because he killed a Negro, but because it was old man Edwards' Negro that was killed. Tavis sued Ingraham and got a whopping price for damages, at least he got the price of the Negro, and healthy Negroes in those days were valued high. And so the matter ended, or you thought it might end. But a man never knows what can go on in the mind of another man, or even in his own, and so it was with Ingraham.

It is well known for a fact though that a Scotchman can get himself more mixed up inside than any other nationality and everybody knows too that when a Scotchman starts going to the bad he can go to the bad faster than anybody else. Or when he takes to drink, he takes to it more whole hog than anybody else.

Ingraham got to brooding on what he'd done. And then he began to drink a little, and he brooded more than before. People noticed that soon he began to stay off to himself and, when you would see him around in town, he didn't have much to say, but had a sort of strange look on his face. During one of the big meetings in the Methodist Church, when the spirit was working among the brethren, he stood up in the congregation and confessed his sin, said he had done wrong, had killed a Negro human being and wanted everybody to pray for him. Hallelujah was the answer, and they said they would. The parson waited on Ingraham, talked to him, and felt convinced that his sin had been forgiven — and told him so. So for a while Ingraham perked up and was his old self again. But before long he began to get morose and silent, as before. He finally moved out of the Valley and went over to the west there in the wild woods of the sandy barrens, built himself a little shack and became a hermit. And so all his fair promising life was denied. His father had sent him to the university where he had graduated, and he had a big future in the law, they said. Now all that was passed.

So Ingraham lived over there for several years, until he was almost forgotten. One day, somebody passing along the road noticed buzzards sitting on the roof of his little cabin. They told some neighbors about it and they all went over and found Ingraham dead on the floor. The same pistol he had used to kill the Negro with he had used to shoot himself through the head.

*Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth*

A popular 19th century sentimental novelist once much read in the Valley.

Sow a thought, reap an act.

Sow an act, reap a habit.

Sow a habit, reap a character.

And sow a character, reap a destiny.

(A proverb rhyme.)

As you *sow*, so shall you reap.

*Sow* the wind and reap the whirlwind.

*sow*

A woman of bad reputation. "Old sow" is the usual term.

Like the old *sow*, you have to pull her ears off to get her to the mash and pull her tail off to get her away.

*sowbelly*

Bacon.

Whatsoever a man *soweth* that shall he also reap.

Call a *spade* a *spade*.

Never man *spake* like this man.

*span*

The length between the tips of the thumb and the little finger when the hand is outspread. This was an old-time measurement, and I remember hearing two old gentlemen sitting by a coal stove in a local store one winter day arguing about little children that go to hell. One of them was maintaining that according to the Scriptures these little creatures burning in everlasting fire were only a span long. I don't know where he got his measurement.

*span-fine new*

Brand new.

*spang*

A term suggestive of force or quickness. "Spang, and that fellow was gone from there."

Exactly, right there. "He hit him spang in the middle."

*Spanish fly*

A drug supposed to increase sexual desire and potency. It used to be a popular quack medicine in the Valley. Perhaps it still is.

*Spanish moss*

A long moss that grows in damp semitropical regions somewhat as a parasite. The lower part of the Valley is well-stocked with it. It is referred to as "Old Graybeard." It especially seems to love pecan and live oak trees. I have seen orchards of the former down near the coast literally choked to death by it. Mrs. E.M. Backus gives a rather interesting legend about this moss as she heard it from an old Negro man.

"Long time ago there was a powerful wicked fellow," said the old Negro. "He was that sinful that Death he don't have the heart to cut him

off in his sins, 'ceptin' he give him a warning. So one day Death he appear to the wicked man and tell him how that week he gwine come for him. The wicked man be that upset and skeered he get down on his knees and beg Death to let him live a little longer. The wicked man he take on and beg 'twell Death he promise he won't come for him 'twell he give him one more warning.

"So the years go by, but the wicked man he grow more wicked, and one day Death he appear to him again. And Death he tell the wicked man how that day week he gwine come for him, but the wicked man he more frightened than what he was before; and he get down on his knees, the wicked man do, and beg Death to let him live a little longer, and he weep and mo'n and carry on and Death he promise the wicked man how before he come for him he gwine send him a token what he can see or what he can hear.

"Well, the mo' years go by, and the wicked man he get to be a powerful old man — he deaf and blind, and he jest drag hisself about. One day Death he done come for the wicked man once more, but the wicked man he say how Death done promised him he won't come for him 'twell he send him a token what he can see. Then the wicked man he say how he can't see no token, 'cause he say how he done gone blind. Then Death he say how he done send a token what he can hear. But the wicked man he say how he can't hear no token 'cause he now plumb deaf. And he beg Death that hard to let him live, that Death he get plumb outdone with the wicked man, and Death he jest go off and leave him to hisself.

"And the wicked man he jest wander about the woods, and his children all die, and his friends all die. Still he jest wander about the woods. He blind, and he can't see, and he deaf, and he can't hear. He that blind that he can't see to find no food, and he that deaf he never know when anybody try to speak to him.

"And the wicked man he done perish away 'twell he jest a shadow with long hair. His hair it grow longer and longer, and it blow in the wind and still he can't die, 'cause Death he done pass him by. So he have to wander and blow about the woods, and his body all perish away 'twell all you can see is his powerful long hair blowing all 'bout the trees; and his hair is done blow about the trees 'twell it done grow fast, and now you all folks done call it Spanish moss."

### *Spanish needles*

The yucca or Spanish bayonet. A strong tea made from it was always a good gargle for the sore throat.

*Spare* the rod and spoil the child.

*Spare* well to spend well.

*spare bed*

The guest bed.

*spar-hawk*

Sparrow hawk.

*to spark*

To court, also to inspire, to begin.

A little *spark* can kindle a great fire.

*sparkler*

A diamond ring. "After the poor simp gave her that sparkler she wanted to play bridge ever' night to show it off on her hand."

as *sparkling* as the dew

*sparrow grass*

Asparagus. I remember John Charles McNeill's poem which I memorized as a boy.

"I once et too much sparrow grass.

They thought I was dead till I breathed on glass."

*spatter-board (splatter-board)*

The dashboard of a buggy or carriage which helped protect the driver or passenger from being spattered with dirt or mud.

*Speak* when you are spoken to,

Come when you are called.

*speak a parable*

To speak an undeniable truth, an entirely appropriate remark. Same as speak a mouthful.

*to speak of*

A little emphasis phrase, often denigratory. "He's got no money to speak of."

*Speak* of the devil and soon you will see his tail.

*Speak* well of the dead.

*spearmint*

A popular herb for the housewife's garden.

*speck*

A bit, a little, hardly any at all. "He wasn't a speck of trouble, that baby wasn't."

*specked*

Marked with tiny decayed spots. "All my horse apples are specked this year."

*Specks* on the fingers, fortune lingers.

*Specks* on the thumbs, fortune comes.

(A divination rhyme.)

*spectacle*

An unhappy situation or condition. "Now ain't you a spectacle, standing there wetting your britches."

*Speech* is silver, silence is golden.

All his *speed* is in his spurs.

*spell*

A length of time, an attack of illness. "Social Security will help you in your first spell of sickness but don't try to ride on it all the time."

To relieve, to rest. "Spell me on this handspike a minute, Bo."

A season of weather.

An incantation, conjuration.

*Spelling Match*

A spelling contest. At Pleasant Union School Friday afternoon was a great time. We had spelling matches to end the week. And how we loved to cut each other down.

Great *spenders* are poor lenders.

*spicebush*

Attractive shrub that grows in the swamps and along the streams of the Valley. It is also called the fever bush and allspice. Oil from the berries of this bush is supposed to be good for bruises, white swelling, worms, pneumonia, colds, coughs, and especially it was good for these illnesses when mixed with sassafras tea. In the Civil War the soldiers who were camped in the Valley used this generally. The shrub seems to be getting rarer every year.

*spider*

There are many superstitions connected with the spider. We were always taught in the Valley as children that killing a spider would bring rain. And in dry weather we used to go looking for these little insects to squash them with our heels. Also one of the weather superstitions is that when spiders are numerous in the fall, a hard winter is ahead.

The low, three-legged cooking utensil, usually made of cast iron, which was

set on red hot coals for baking bread or biscuits. Sometimes the “led” would be put on and other hot coals piled on it for extra good hot cooking.

*spider-shanked*

Thin-legged, lanky.

*spifflicate*

To confuse, to mix up. “I never heard such a spifflicating sermon as that fellow pulled off when he preached on ‘God as the Very God.’ ”

Save the *spigot* and waste at the bung is a mighty poor way of doing.

*spike*

To mix liquor with, to put alcohol in an otherwise mild drink. “This orange juice is spiked, oh, my Lord!”

*spile*

Spoil.

*spiling*

Piling. “You better watch out for that fo’by, I believe the spilings is about to give way.”

*spill beans*

To tell secrets, let out confidential information.

*spinach*

The ordinary vegetable, of course, and also money. “That man’s got plenty of spinach and he can afford a mansion like that.”

A beard. “I’ve got to get my spinach shaved off.”

*spindling*

Frail.

*spinning one’s wheels*

Useless action.

*spit in his eye*

A term for an insult.

The *spirit* is willing but the flesh is weak.

The letter killeth but the *spirit* giveth life.

Why should the *spirit* of man be proud.

*spirits*

Hard liquor. “I’m not a drinker but I always keep a bottle of spirits about the house just in case.”



Don't *spit* in the spring that waters you.

If one wishes to be lucky at fishing, he should *spit* on his bait before he puts it in the water.

*spit and polish*

Fastidious housekeeping and tidying up. Also particular neatness in personal grooming.

*spitball*

We boys in school used to chew up paper, wad the chewed stuff in little balls and, with our beanshooters when the teacher wasn't looking, fire off a shot at somebody we didn't like or at a girl at some distance across the room we did like. The spitball also applies to the pitching method in baseball. Pitchers used to chew slippery elm and with a bit of this on two fingers, clasp the ball lightly and throw it overhand. It would dip suddenly toward the ground to the anger and dismay of the batter. The spitball has been outlawed now in baseball.

*spitbox*

A box filled with sand or sawdust into which tobacco chewers could spit. This used to be a constant piece of the furnishings near the stove in the country stores.

*spit cotton*

White spittle from thirst or nervousness, sometimes from heavy drinking of whiskey. "What's the matter with you, fellow, you keep standing there spitting cotton."

cut off your nose to *spite* your face

*spitfire*

A high-tempered person.

*spit'n image*

The very image, a close resemblance. "He's the spit'n image of old man Bill Byrd."

*spit out God's fire*

To preach fervently.

He *spits* in his own face.

Who works against heaven *spits* in his own face.

*spizzerinctum*

Energy, drive, pep, know-how.

*splatfooted*

Splayfooted.

*splatterdabs*

Hot cakes.

*splice*

To marry, to be joined in wedlock.

*split*

Splint. A "split-bottomed chair."

*split one's britches*

To overdo, to overact.

*to be in a split stick*

To be in an embarrassing or difficult situation. Another form of this is "to have one's tail in a split stick."

I remember long time ago when we would go possum hunting and were lucky enough to catch a possum. We would cut down a little oak sapling, drive the axe through it to split it and put the possum's tail in that split, release the sides and let them close in on the tail. Then, with the little pole over our shoulders, and the possum behind out of reach of biting us, we would march proudly home.

*split the quilt*

Divorce.

*splitting*

Severe, intense. "Children, I've got a splitting headache today, so let me be."

*split-tongue*

A hypocrite, a liar.

*spot*

A spot or stain.

*splotchy*

Marked with spots or spots.

*spludge*

Splurge. "Lord a-mercy it's a sight to see that woman spludge when she comes driving up to church in her Lincoln Continental."

*splutter*

A fuss, a confusion.

*spoil*

To over-pet, to mollycoddle. "No wonder he never turned out to be any

good, his mother spoiled him to death as a baby.”

*spoiled rotten*

Usually said of a child that's been spoiled by overindulging parents.

*spondulicks*

Money.

What's full of holes and still holds water? (Riddle— *A sponge.*)

*sponge*

To cheat, to live off, to take advantage of, to beg. “That fellow's a sponger if I ever saw one, so you better watch out.”

Not too long ago every home bathroom had its sponge instead of the present washcloth.

*spools*

We children used to have great fun with a spool which our mother would let us have after she had used up the thread in her sewing. We used spools for many things, especially for blowing soap bubbles and for making tops we called “dancers.” We would cut the spools half in two and then shape them down to a point and put a little piece of what we called axle through them and sharpen this. Then with the flattened end between thumb and second finger we'd give it a snap and send the little thing dancing away on its point. We used to compete as to which one's dancer could spin longest.

*spoon*

To court, to make love.

*spoon-fed*

Spoiled, pampered.

*sport*

To court, to run after the girls. “How can he pull fodder when he's out sporting every night?”

*old sport*

An elderly lecher, also a term of friendly affection. “Golly, I'm glad to meet up with you, old sport, here at the class reunion.”

*sporting house*

A whorehouse.

*s'pose*

Suppose.

*spot*

To give one an advantage. “He spotted me three holes and then he beat me.”

*in a spot (on the spot)*

To be in a difficult or testing situation or position.

as *spotted* as a leopard

*spotted spurge*

An emetic weed that grows in sandy and gravelly soil and waste grounds in the Valley. It flowers in July and has been used as a stimulant and a remedy for dysentery.

*spotter*

An incognito informer, or spy.

*spout off*

To run off at the mouth, to talk garrulously and foolishly.

*spraddle*

Spread out, separate. "You boys spraddle out with that seine and you'll catch more fish."

*sprags*

Small screws or nails.

*sprained her ankle*

To be made pregnant or bigged.

*Jack Sprat* could eat no fat,  
His wife could eat no lean,  
And so you see between them both  
They licked the platter clean.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

*sprat-legged*

Spraddle-legged, bowlegged.

*spread*

A sumptuous meal. "What a cornshucking that was and what a spread the old man and the old woman put out!"

The putting on of weight. "She's getting her middle-age spread."

*spreading adder*

Also known as puff adder. We children used to find these harmless snakes in old stumps or under rotted logs and have fun teasing them with switches or long sticks. They would hiss and puff and distend their necks and yellow bodies and twist and turn and jook their heads at us. After we'd had enough fun we would get sticks or stones and kill them. I haven't seen or heard of a spreading adder in the Valley for, lo, these many years.

*spread it thick (thin)*

To live or act expensively (or meagerly).

*spread oneself*

To make every effort, to reach out widely, to widen one's business interests, and so on.

*spreckled*

Speckled.

*sprig*

A young child, usually a pert and sassy one.

*spriggle*

To limb out or leaf out, to fork out. "After I had planted that fig, it all sprigged out until dry weather hit it, and then it burnt slam up."

*to spring*

To sprain or wrench. "I sprung my wrist trying to lift that heavy rock."

*spring beauty*

A lovely wild flower that is popular among sweethearts in the Valley. I remember how in the spring a certain girl and I would go out in search especially of spring beauty. There was something so poetic in this little flower that it fitted right in with our yearnings and our mood, and it was innocent too. So that was good.

*spring chicken*

A young person, usually refers to girls, sometimes called pullets.

*spring cleaning*

The time for airing quilts, searching beds for bugs, putting up new curtains, etc. A custom now pretty much passed away.

*spring green and gold*

A low attractive perennial. It is one of the earliest blooming plants in the Valley. It grows especially in dry woodland and lasts on through the early summer.

*springhouse*

The usual small house built over a spring to protect the water and in which milk and butter were kept fresh in the old days long before refrigerators were thought of.

*spring lizard*

The salamander.

*spring run*

A small stream fed by a spring. On the old surveyors' maps the spring run was a familiar term.

*spring to it*

Begin with great energy, start to work.

*sprinkling*

A few, a scattered gathering. "There was only a sprinkling of people at church today."

The religious custom of sprinkling water on the head of the new convert instead of immersing him in a baptismal pool or creek. The Baptists believe in immersion, and the Methodists in sprinkling, and that's the only difference I can see in the two dogmas.

*sprinkly*

Sprinkled.

*sprout*

A young person.

*sprout wings*

To become angelic.

*spruce up*

To dress up, to make one's toilette.

as *spry* as a cricket

as *spry* as a kitten

*spunk*

Partly decayed wood. Same as punk.

*spunk water*

Rain water usually collected in log-hollows and stumps. It is supposed to be good for sore eyes. It is also a good cure for warts. If a person could find a hollow stump with this spunk water in it and put his hand in it and recite the following verse — he would get relief in a few days—

Barley-corn, barley-corn,  
Injun-meal shorts,  
Spunk water, spunk water,  
Swaller these warts.

(Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.)

*spurs*

Honors, final attainment.

*I Spy*

A most popular game among all the children in the Valley. It is so well-known that it is needless to describe it here.

*squaddle*

A combination of a squat and a straddle.

Dost thou love life, then do not *squander* time, for that is the stuff life is made of.

*square*

Honest, reliable. Same as a square shooter.

Straight, direct. "That road runs square up the mountain."

Completely, entirely. "The bullet went square through him."

A queer person.

*square around*

To make room, get settled as to seating.

*squared away*

Ready, all set, prepared.

*squarehead*

An awkward, slow-acting man.

*square it*

To make amends, to make right, to make fit, also to pay one's account. Sometimes square up.

*square meal*

A full satisfactory meal.

*square off*

To get set, prepared for action. "They squared off for a fight, but the captain arrived just in time."

*squat*

To answer the call of nature.

*Squat Tag*

See "Tag."

*squatty*

Fat, short and stocky, squabbly.

*squaw*

Woman, wife. Often used in derision.

*squaw man*

A henpecked husband.

*squeak*

To turn informer, same as to squeal.

*a squeaker*

A close call. "Carolina finally beat Duke but, boy, it was a squeaker."

*squeaks* like a rusty hinge

All *squeal* and no wool as the devil said when he sheared his hogs.

*squeals* like a stuck pig

It's the wheel that *squeals* that gets the grease.

*squeech (squench) owl*

Screech Owl.

He *squeezes* the dollar till the eagle screams.

*squelch*

To silence, to tame down, to hush up. "Squelch them young'uns, will you, they're running me crazy."

Same as to inform or squeal on.

*squench (squinch)*

Eye puckering, squint. "He had a habit of squenching up his eyes when he talked."

*squiggled*

Wiggled.

*squinch*

Quench.

*squinchd up*

Dried, shriveled.

*Squirrels* storing food is a sign there will be a hard winter.

*squirt gun*

A little water popgun made from an ordinary small length of bamboo cane with a homemade plunger for squirting water at some unsuspecting person.

*squirts*

The diarrhea. "My little boy's got the squirts the worst of all."

*squirts like a goose*

Defecating with a rush, as in diarrhea.



*squoze*

Past tense of squeeze.

*sqush*

Crush.

*squshy*

Marshy, miry, soft.

*srink*

Shrink.

*have a stab at*

To make a try at.

It's too late to shut the *stable* when the horse is gone.

*stable manure*

Manure, usually from horses and mules, that accumulates in the stable as opposed to the barn lot or outdoor cow kind. It is ranked higher than either cow or hog manure as a fertilizer but below chicken manure.

*stack*

Temper. "When Ed Spaulding, a colored man, ordered a co'-cola right in front of Avis Jones, why, Avis blew his stack and turned and knocked Spaulding down."

*stacked*

Said of a woman of good figure — good breasts and shapely hips.

*stacks*

Plenty, a large supply. "He's got stacks of money."

All the world's a *stage*.

*at this stage of the game*

Under the present condition, at this reading or reporting.

*stagger*

To shock or surprise. "The news of his daughter's running away really staggered old Otis."

*staggerbush*

A common shrub that grows in drier bogs and sand where the water table is shallow. It is poisonous and when stock, especially sheep, happen to eat of the leaves, they go staggering about. Therefore, the name.

*staggers*

Wobbly drunken movements. There was an old belief that a worm in the

brain caused the staggers in sheep.

*stag party*

An all male party.

It is unlucky to meet one on the *stairs*.

*stall*

A finger-shaped cloth protection for a hurt finger, usually tied around the wrist to hold it. "Well, you better go get your mammy to make a stall for that finger, boy, or you'll catch poison in it."

*stamping ground (stomping ground)*

A customary haunt or usual visiting place.

*stand*

A crop, a supply, a successful sprouting. "I've got a fine stand of corn this year and I'm hoping the cold weather won't start the cutworm working in it."

To accept, to endure. "I don't see how she stands her husband — him a-harking and a-spitting all the time."

A good *stand* is better than a hard run.

*standing on one's head*

To be unduly excited.

*stand in need*

To be in pressing need.

*standoff*

An arm screw supporting wires, such as television cable, running along the walls of the house. Also a tie or draw as in a game. "After we'd cleaned up the shucks, Lloyd and Irving got to wrestlin' and boy did they go to it, but it was a standoff."

*standoffish*

Cold, aloof.

*stand up*

To be fooled, to receive a rebuff, to fail to appear. "I don't trust making a date with that fellow — he too often stands me up."

*staple*

Average, fair. "They're paying a good price now for staple cotton."

*Star* bright, *star* light,

First *star* I've seen tonight,

I wish I may, I wish I might

See my true love tonight.

(A divination rhyme.)

Sometimes the last line goes—

Have my wish I wish tonight.

*starch*

Courage, stamina.

*starching*

There's a folk saying that starching the tail of a man's shirt will make him harsh and ill-tempered. I don't doubt it.

*take the starch out*

To deflate, to take one down a peg or two.

*star grass*

These little plants are found in the grassy woods in the deep summer. The plant grows abundantly in the woods and the bogs throughout the Valley. Tea made from the roots is supposed to be good for the colic, and therefore it is often called "colic-root."

*Star light, star bright*

Same as the rhyme beginning "Star bright." One is supposed to make a wish on the first star that one sees at night and the wish will come true.

*star-of-Bethlehem*

A popular little garden flower.

*stars*

There's a superstition that if you count the stars in a fog circle around the moon, the number of the stars will designate the number of days before rain or snow comes.

eyes like *stars*

Counting the *stars* won't pay the taxes.

*stars and garters!*

A common exclamation.

*falling stars*

There's a scattered belief that falling stars are souls coming to the earth to be born in newborn babies. There is also the belief that a falling star denotes someone's death. See "thunderstone."

*start naked*

Stark naked.

*start the ball rolling*

To begin a thing, to get business under way, or get a game going.

*stash*

To cache, to stow, to hide, to put in a place for safekeeping.

as *stately* as an oak

as *stately* as a queen

*state of grace*

A purified and sometimes sanctified condition that a person gets into after having his sins forgiven and "believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal savior." Billy Graham in all of his sermons has much to say about the state of grace.

*Statues*

A children's game, especially popular with the younger ones.

The leader, "It," is usually chosen by a counting-out rhyme. He or she then takes the hand of another player and whirls that player around. The second player "freezes" in exactly the position he finds himself at the end of the spin. The game continues until all the players are whirled and have "frozen." The leader then selects the one judged to be in the most ludicrous attitude and he becomes "It" and the game continues.

*staub*

To stub. "He staubed his toe on that rock and did he let out a cry. I'll say so!"

*stay put*

To be fixed, remain in one place.

*steady*

A loyal and exclusive sweetheart.

as *steady* as a rock

*"Steal Away to Jesus"*

Another beautiful Negro spiritual that eased many a long hour for the workers in the turpentine woods and the cotton fields and filled them with hope of an eternal rich reward in the afterlife for their deprivation in this.

"Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus.

Steal away, steal away home.

I ain't got long to stay here.

"My Lord, he calls me, he calls me by the thunder,

The trumpet sounds within-a my soul.

I ain't got long to stay here.

"Steal away," etc.

“Green trees a-bending, po’ sinners stand a-trembling,  
 The trumpet sounds within-a my soul.  
 I ain’t got long to stay here,  
 Lord, I ain’t got long to stay here.”

### *Stealing Sticks*

A popular school children’s game. On Sunday afternoons we children used to play this game until our legs ached and kept us sleepless at night.

A large playing space is divided across the middle by a marked-off line, and the players are chosen for two teams. Behind each team a circle is drawn on the ground and a number of sticks put in it — say, six or seven. Then each of the players tries to run around and across and steal a stick before his opponent touches him. If he is touched, he has to stand as a prisoner in the circle with the sticks, hoping that one of his pals on the other side will be able to steal across and get him out without being touched. Only one stick or one prisoner may be taken at a time. The game continues until one side is completely defeated, or the sticks on one side are all stolen, or the players are tired and decide to do something else.

### *steal one’s thunder*

To preempt one’s authority.

### *to steal the show*

To get in the limelight, to gather all the applause, to be the star.

### *steam*

Speed, swiftness in throwing. “That pitcher really steamed the ball across.”

### *steep*

Expensive, excessively priced. “Boy, the price is steep — steep, you heard me!”

as *steep* as a ladder

The *steeper* the hill, the stouter the heart.

### *steeple*

The male organ.

### *bum steer*

False advice, false directions.

### *stem-winder*

A go-getter, a hard worker. “That Cyclone Mac is a stem-winding preacher and, man, he gets the sinners down lickin’ sweat at the mourners’ bench.”

*step*

To go quickly, to move fast. "I've got to step home and get my shovel before I can join the road gang."

To measure by walking in strides estimated to be a yard long. "He stepped his field and found he had five acres in it." Sometimes "step off."

*Step* and git it.

*to step aside a bit*

To defecate, to urinate. "Excuse me, while I step aside a bit."

*step on it*

To go fast, speed up.

*step on one's toes*

To offend one, to hurt one's feelings, even to insult.

*step on the gas*

Move faster.

*step out*

To dress up and go calling or go to a party.

There's a belief that *stepping* over a child, especially a small child, will stop it from growing.

*stepping stone*

A means toward a beginning. The verse from Tennyson's "In Memoriam" always sticks in my mind.

"I held it truth with him who sings  
To one clear harp in divers tones,  
That men may rise on stepping stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things."

*steps*

There's a superstition if someone steps over you while you are lying down you will have bad luck unless he immediately steps back over you.

*stereoscope*

A parlor entertainment item, and any half well-to-do family in the Valley used to have one, along with an assortment of photographic views to look at. Since the coming of the motion picture the stereoscope has disappeared. I remember with what joy and astonishment we children would look through the two lenses of our stereoscope at, say, the picture of a deer in a forest. What was flat and two-dimensional before now appeared as three-dimensional. There stood an actual deer before us. Sears, Roebuck and

Company used to carry a full line of these — as they did of almost everything else under the sun. Prices were incredible. The instrument itself sold from 24¢ each to \$1.87 for the extra large size, made of “polished rosewood” — “and set with nickelplated trimmings.” A set of “36 genuine photographic views” to go with the stereoscope was priced at thirty-six cents — one cent each, and they were good for months and months of viewing.

A stereoscope is now produced as a child's toy, with the finer ones as museum pieces.

### *Stetson hat*

A man's hat, very stylish and popular in the Valley the latter part of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th.

Old Drury Skerrit, who lived down near Carver's Creek Falls, had a black Stetson hat he was very fond of, and he said that when he died he wanted it buried with him. He got down near death's door and he told the folks to bury him under an old tree out there in the field, “And I want you to bury me with my John B. Stetson hat on and my Vici (Vi-sy) kid shoes,” he said, “for I expect to come back and walk around some after I die and I'll need 'em both.”

There was a lot of argument after the old man breathed his last. Some of the folks didn't want to do what Drury said, for as they put it, “Look here, we don't want to get the neighborhood ha'nted on account of him.” But others said that the wishes of the dead were sacred as everybody knew and Drury in his life had always been a harmless man, so if he did come back he wouldn't hurt a living soul.

Finally they buried Drury as he requested, and sure enough he did come back and walk around, Vici shoes or no shoes. And he still does, according to what the people say around Carver's Creek. One night he will appear on the road in the shape of a ball of fire, with the hat on it, and then maybe again in the shape of a little girl or a black dog, with hat the same. And folks say no matter what shape Drury's ghost takes they always know it's him because of that Stetson hat. They never bother about the shoes.

### *stew*

Confusion. “Everything was in such a stew at the church supper that I didn't know whether I was coming or going.”

### *like a stewed owl*

The “morning-after” condition.

### *stewed to the gills*

Excessively drunk.

### *stew in one's grease*

To take one's own medicine, to have to grin and bear it.

*stick*

A dull person, same as a stick-in-the-mud.

*stick* like a leech

more than you can shake a *stick* at

*stick and dirt chimney*

Sometimes called stick and daub or stick and mud chimney. In the old days nearly all the Valley farmhouses and tenant cabins were served with this type of poorer chimney. The base of the chimney and firebox were of rock, and then when the flue or throat began, crossed sticks were used to build it up to reach above the roof of the house with an inner open throat space of some twelve by fourteen inches for the smoke to escape. Mud or daub was packed in between the sticks and the "throat" was thickly lined with it to protect the sticks from the fire in the fireplace below.

*stick broom*

A store-bought broom with a handle as contrasted to a broomstraw or homemade broom.

*stick one's neck out*

To take an undue risk.

*stickpins*

A once fashionable adornment for a man's necktie. When I was about fourteen, I tried to sell stickpins in my neighborhood, but soon realized I was no salesman and gave up the effort. Mine were from a mail-order house sent on consignment and were priced at fifteen cents each, my commission to be five cents each.

*sticking plaster*

In the old days sticking plasters were a common treatment for all sorts of aches and pains, boils, pimples and eruptions. My mother used to buy these sticking plasters at the drugstore. I can still remember them and feel them tearing at my flesh. They were thin flesh-colored sheets, one side gummed to stick on the afflicted place. Of course, now these old sticking plasters are replaced by all sorts of bandaids. See also "Aunt Jemima's plaster."

*stick-in-the-mud*

A fuddy-duddy, a dull fellow, a failure. "He's an old stick-in-the-mud and his eyes are in the back of his head."

*sticks*

A backward neighborhood or section of the country. "All the New York people used to think North Carolina was full of pellagra, hookworm and people who live in the sticks."



*sticks* like glue

*sticks* tighter than a brother

*sticks* tighter than a tick

*sticktight*

A rather coarse annual or biennial and often called stickseed. The plant bears little flat prickled fruits and hence the name. When these little flat fruits ripen, they will stick to your clothes as if with a will of their own. We used to call the species we knew best "beggar lice."

*stick to one's guns*

Hold to one's beliefs, one's convictions, one's attitude.

*stick up a stick*

To claim, to mark as one's own. "He's already stuck up his stick for that Joe Turner gal."

*stick up for*

To support, defend. "I see where Bob Morgan says he'll stick up for any senator who gets in trouble."

*the wrong end of the stick*

To be at a disadvantage. "When Joe went into partnership with old Horace, he got hold of the wrong end of the stick."

*sticky*

A special kind of sweet bun or biscuit.

Sentimental.

*stid*

Bedstead.

*a stiff*

A corpse.

A penis erection.

as *stiff* as a broom

as *stiff* as a plank

as *stiff* as a poker

as *stiff* as a ramrod

as *stiff* as a stick

as *stiff* as a wagon tongue

*stiff upper lip*

Courage, stamina.

as *still* as death

*Still* waters run deep.

*stilleyard*

A steelyard, weighing scales.

*sting*

To cheat. "He stung me in that horse trade."

*stingaree (stinger)*

A woman's diseased private organs.

*stinging adder*

A fabulous snake, supposed to inhabit the Valley.

*stinging nettle*

We boys used to have great fun going out in the sandy woods and digging up stinging nettle roots. We could find them by their shiny white blossoms here and there. Sometimes we would dig down two or three feet in the ground to find the tuber. These tubers were very succulent, and we had great fun eating them. They were usually about the size of a cigar and, much like a cigar, tapering at each end. We would peel them and chew the white delicious meat happily. The Indians were supposed to have counted these roots as a special delicacy, and the ancient Romans used them as a help against sexual impotency.

as *stingy* as a Scotchman

as *stingy* as sin

as *stingy* as the bark on the tree

He's so *stingy* he wouldn't give you air in a jug.

*stink like a buzzard*

Excessively bad smelling.

*stinkabutt*

A foul person. We boys used to sing a sort of low-down foolish song which began, "When I make ten dollars a day — stinkabutt, fuckabutt, take it away."

*stinker*

Hot. "Today is going to be another stinker."

A sorry fellow, an unreliable person, one held in contempt.

*stinking jim*

A small speckled land terrapin.

*stinking pussy*

Dirty, foul-smelling woman.

*stinking rich*

Very rich indeed.

*stinks* like a polecat*stinks* like a skunk*stinks* like ditch water*stinks* like hell*stink tree*

Tree of heaven or Ailanthus. This tree used to be popular around plantations. My grandfather planted several of them and some of them grew to be two or three feet in diameter. One of them is still alive in front of the place where the old Green log house once stood.

*stir around*

To make speed, be busy. "Stir around and get things going, will you?"

*stirrup cup*

A dram taken on horseback in the old days before riding off.

*stir up tail feathers*

Make one angry, to irritate excessively.

*stitch*

Clothing, dress. "There she stood in front of her window with not a stitch on."

A sudden pain or catch in one's muscle.

A *stitch* in time saves nine.

*in stitches*

Convulsed with hilarity.

*stob*

A small piece of scantling or post or stake.

To stab.

*stobble*

Stubble.

*take stock*

To stop and consider.

One's own soiled *stocking* tied around the neck would cure sore throat.

*stocking feet*

To walk about without shoes. "I got up and went out in my stocking feet, and some Ku Kluxers had sowed carpet tacks on the front porch — wow!"

*stocks*

A device formerly used to punish offenders.

*Stolen* fruits are always sweetest.

*Stolen* pleasures are always sweetest.

*stomach*

Liking, taste, core, interest. "Dick has no stomach for politics since that bad beating in the primary."

*to turn one's stomach*

Response to abhorrent thing or act. "The way that peddler chewed his food with his mouth open was enough to turn one's stomach."

*stomp*

To stamp.

*stomp down*

Used for emphasis. "He's a stomp down scoundrel." And sometimes I've heard it as "He's a stomp down gentleman."

*stomping*

Also for emphasis. "He's a stomping fine man."

*stomping ground*

Home, familiar surroundings.

The *stone* which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.

He kills two birds with one *stone*.

If a son shall ask bread of his father, shall he give him a *stone*?

A rolling *stone* gathers no moss.

Leave no *stone* unturned.

There shall not be left one *stone* upon the other.

*stoned*

Totally drunk.

*stone mint*

A fragrant perennial, very popular in the flower gardens in the Valley. A tea made from it is good for headaches, fevers and colds.

*stones*

Testicles.

*run one's head against a stone wall*

Meet up with absolutely unyielding conditions or an unsolvable situation.

*stool*

Fecal discharge.

*stool pigeon*

An informer, a low-down betrayer.

*Stop, Look and Listen*

A warning at the railroad crossing and an admonition in other situations.

*stopped up*

To have a bad head cold. "I'm all stopped up this morning and got a headache to a fare-ye-well."

*stopper*

An exaggerated lie or cock-and-bull story.

*store-bought*

As contrasted with a homemade article.

*storm*

To scold or rage.

After the *storm* the calm comes.

*story*

A lie. "His mammy whipped him this morning for telling her a story."

*stout*

Strong.

Put a *stout* heart to a steep hill.

*stouten up*

To grow, to fatten.

*stove*

Past tense of stave. "He stove that knife in Lemmie's back."

*stove up*

Muscle-bound, stiff, temporarily crippled from overwork or overexertion.

“I split rails yestiddy and I’m all stove up.”

*a-straddle*

Astride. “Mr. Turner’s niece come down here from New York and went riding about the neighborhood a-straddle like a man.”

*straddle bug*

A tricky politician or subterfuger.

*straddle the issue*

To be on both sides, indecisive.

*stradways (wise)*

Astride.

*straight*

Honest, reliable.

as *straight* as a die

as *straight* as a line

as *straight* as a martin to his gourd

as *straight* as an arrow

as *straight* as a pine

as *straight* as a ramrod

as *straight* as a stick

as *straight* as a shingle

Honest, reliable. “He’s straight as a shingle — you can count on his word.”

as *straight* as a string

as *straight* as the crow flies

*straighten*

To tidy up. “I’ve got to straighten up my room before I go.”

*Strain* at a gnat and swallow a camel.

*strainer*

A sieve.

*Strain* every nerve.

*Strait* is the way and narrow the gate.

*strak*

Strike.

I was a *stranger* and ye took me in.

Put the *stranger*  
Near the danger.

### *The Stranger*

A man nobody in the Valley knew.

One day Mr. Mac and I were poking around in old Summerville Cemetery of Tirzah Church near Lillington, and he was identifying the graves and recounting some of the deeds and events connected with various silent sleepers there.

"Take that grave right over there by that cape jessamine bush," he said. "That's the resting place of a man nobody knows. In the old days there used to be a sort of town here. It's vanished now like Averasboro and many another Valley town, except for one or two houses. As a boy I can remember there were quite a number of dwellings here — an old jail, the remains of a school once taught by a learned doctor from Yale whose wife is buried in this churchyard, and a boardinghouse where the students used to live. In them days too there was a big sawmill, a hotel inn, and several stores. The Scotsmen built the town here above the river as a sort of summer resort. In the hot weather they moved their families up to the highlands to escape the mosquitoes and malaria in the flats. And so quite a settlement was built here. They say there was plenty of high life and fun and doings among the young sports and the purty girls. And of course there was, for there's always a lot of fun where young people are gathered together.

"Well, one summer evening came a young fellow into this village and got a room at the inn. People didn't have to register on the books then the way they do now, so his name was not recorded. He stayed around for a few days and was quite a favorite among the dandies and the ladies. They said he could dance and sing ballads and talk of far places in the world where he had been. He spoke with a sort of accent, and some said he was a German, some said he was a Frenchman, and others said he must have been some kind of lord in disguise that had fled out of Europe to save his life. Anyhow, the purtiest girl among them all — sweet Belle Bethune — fell in love with him — just wild in love from what they said. But even she never did get his name. She, like the rest of the people, just called him Stranger. At home I've got a copy of a love song they say she used to sing. Maybe she sang it to him as they strolled about telling their love in the summer evening. I don't know. Anyhow it was supposed to be a favorite of hers. Well, what should happen to that stranger but that he was struck down with the fever while he was here, and in a few days was dead. Cal Bethune and the rest of them looked through his belongings but never a scratch of writing, never a sign as to who he was could be found. So he was buried here in the

churchyard. And Belle herself had a tombstone put up over him, and on it a brief verse which maybe she herself wrote to her dead love.

“Years ago I made a copy of that epitaph before the letters on the tombstone shaled away, but that record too has disappeared. Maybe there’s something symbolic of woman’s affection in that.”

“What happened to Belle? Is she buried near him?”

“No, she’s not, and that’s what I mean. Time is the poultice that heals all heartache and it healed hers finally. She married one of Colin Murchison’s sons and they moved away to Texas.”

*strapped*

Broke, penniless.

*straw*

Pine needles. When rain came in the Valley and we had a release from ploughing or working in the fields, we boys usually had to go to the woods and “rake straw” which was used for bedding for the mules and the cows. How we hated it! At least I did.

the *straw* that breaks the camel’s back

don’t care a *straw*

That is the last *straw*.

You can’t make bricks without *straw*.

*strawberry bush*

The swamp euonymus, known in folk poetry as “hearts-a-busting-with-love.” It grows in moist places in the Valley and along the margins of watercourses. A decoction of the roots has been used for prolapsus uteri and also as a blood purifier.

*strawberry mark*

A birthmark supposed to be caused by the pregnant mother wanting strawberries before the baby was born and not being able to get them. See “birthmark.”

*straw man*

A bogey man, a fanciful creation for purposeful confusion, a weak person.

*Straws*

A children’s game. A number of straws are dropped in a bunch. Players in turn try to remove a straw without disturbing another straw. A player continues as long as he is able to do so.

*drawing straws*

A decision by lot. Usually the one drawing the shortest straw was “It.” I



used an army version of drawing straws in my play "Johnny Johnson," in which the captain burns the end of one match and then, with the opposite ends of the matches showing, the soldiers choose. The one who drew the burnt match had to go over the top to stop the sniper.

***streak***

A characteristic. "He's got a streak of meanness in him."

Where there's a *streak* of fat there's usually a *streak* of lean.

***streak off***

To dart away, to run, move fast. "She streaked off across the field when she saw the sheriff a-coming."

Better to swim with the *stream* than against it.

***strent***

Strength.

***stretcher***

An exaggerated lie or narrative.

***stretches***

A baby's muscular action, much the same as the yawns. See "baby stretches."

***stretch one's blanket***

To exaggerate, to tell a tall tale from nothing. "You can't believe half what William Henry tells you, for he stretches his blanket every time."

Hatred stirreth up *strife*.

***strike***

To reach a final stage. "You'll have to wait till these pickles strike."

To hit upon, to arrive at. "This is the coolest place I've struck."

*Strike* while the iron is hot.

***make a strike***

To be successful.

***strike it rich***

To come into riches, usually rather suddenly.

***strike me dead (pink)***

A mild interjection.

***strike oil***

To have a sudden success.

*strikes me*

Seems to me, appears to be, impresses me. "There's just something about old Ransome that strikes me wrong — I don't trust what he says." "That young man strikes me as first-rate."

*strike up a conversation (friendship)*

*strike up with*

To meet up with, often resulting in a beginning acquaintance.

*string*

To tease, fool, to blackguard. "All the time he was stringing me along — he never meant to marry me."

He plays on one *string*.

Pull the *string*, the latch will raise.

*have on a string*

Have a claim on, to have control of, to be complete boss. "That girl's got Joe on a string, yes, ma'am!"

*string along with*

To agree with, to go along with, to vote the same way. "I'm going to string along with Clyde Hoey — there's nobody else to vote for."

*strings attached*

Conditions. "That place is for sale and no strings attached."

*stringhalt*

Lameness in a horse or mule, usually from a pulled muscle.

*string up*

To hang, to lynch.

*stripper*

A woman who loves to take off her clothes. A strip-tease does it for hire.

*Strive* not with a man without cause.

*stroke*

Past tense of strike.

Little *strokes* fell great oaks.

*strollop*

A mixture of "stroll" and "trollop." A woman of doubtful manners.

as *strong* as a bull

as *strong* as a giant

as *strong* as a horse

as *strong* as a mule

as *strong* as an ox

as *strong* as death

as *strong* as Gibraltar

as *strong* as Hercules

as *strong* as Samson

as *strong* as steel

as *strong* as the rock of Gibraltar

*strop*

To throw down. "Strop him agin' the ground once more and you've got him."

Strap.

*struck-bushel*

An exact bushel. This term comes from the custom of filling a bushel full and then taking a measuring rod or yardstick and striking it rakingly across the level top leaving an exact bushel measure.

*strut*

A brace. Also it means a dilemma, a difficulty or precarious situation. "I'm in a strut, old timer, couldn't you lend me ten dollars?"

All *Stuarts* are not kinsmen of the king.

*stub*

A low small stump or nub. Also to strike against, "to stub one's toe."

*stubby*

Short, thick, muscular.

*stubblefield*

A field of wheat, oats or other grain after it has been mowed.

as *stubborn* as a mule

as *stubborn* as an ox

*stuck on*

To be in love with. "That girl is certainly stuck on that boy."

*stuck up*

Proud, has an attitude of silly superiority.

*stuck with*

Saddled with, left with responsibility for. "He's gone to Texas and she's stuck with those young'uns."

*stud*

A kind of poker game, also an oversexed man.

*studding*

Upright timbers for the construction of the walls of a house. Usually in the South in ordinary dwellings the studding is 2"x 4" scantlings.

*stud horse*

An oversexed male, especially one who has fathered many children.

*studs*

An ornamental removable shirt fastener, usually in formal dress instead of buttons.

*study*

Steady.

The proper *study* of mankind is man.

*study 'bout it*

To consider, to think.

*Stuff* a cold and starve a fever is a good policy.

*stuff and nonsense*

A mild exclamation.

*stuffed shirt*

An all front and no back man, a show-off, a splurger. Often a bore.

*stumble on*

To come upon, to hit upon. "I stumbled on this statement in the Bible the other night that if a man called his brother a fool, he would be in danger of hell-fire."

*stump*

To confuse, to baffle. "I reckon that question stumped him."

To stub or strike one's foot unthoughtedly against an object — a rock or root.

*stump babies*

There's an old folk belief, passed on especially to inquiring children, that babies are found in stumps.

*stump puller*

An old-timey winding machine used for twisting stumps out of the ground. On our farm we used to fasten a pole to a stump with a chain and hitch a mule to the end of the pole and start him going round and round to twist the stump out. Sometimes this worked as a stump puller if the stumps were not too large.

*in a bad row of stumps*

To be in a bad way, an unpleasant situation.

*stump-sucker*

A defective horse, one that bites a part of a stump and holds on to it while he sucks air. Some horse doctors say that a horse that does this is sucking wind.

*stump-tailed*

Bobtailed.

*stump water*

See "spunk water."

He was *stung* at his own game.

*stunner*

A glamorous woman or extraordinary feat.

*stunt*

To stun. "I hit that hog with the axe but only stunted him."

*stunted*

Defective, undersized, mentally retarded.

"One day I had carried Dr. McKeithan's meal to him in Lillington," said my historian friend Mr. Mac. "It was early in the morning and the doctor was up on the roof of his porch fastening a radio aerial. While I was waiting for the cook to bring my meal bag back, Handsome Newberry, a sort of weak-minded Negro and butt of village jokes, came along. Handsome was a little, ugly, bowlegged fellow and that accounted for his mocking nickname. He stopped and watched the doctor a moment and then called easy up to him, 'Boss, can you tell me what's that you're fixing up there?'"

" 'Hello, Handsome,' said the doctor. 'Yes, I'll tell you. It's a radio aerial.'"

" 'You mean one of them things that takes music right out'n the air, suh?'"

" 'Yes, that's right.'"

" 'Um, ain't people smart? Just think of that — music and all kinds of pritty sounds busting right at your ear and you can't hear them withouten

you got one of them wires. Um, ain't people smart?'

" 'Yes, people are smart, Handsome,' said the doctor.

" 'Is! You done said, Doctor. But you know they ain't complete and away smart.'

" 'Maybe you're right. I guess they're not.'

" 'Nossuh, they's some things they can't do.'

" 'What things, Handsome?'

" 'One of them I know plumb well. They can't cure consumption,' said Handsome.

" 'No, they can't but they've been able to do a lot of good, and someday we doctors will cure it.'

" 'Is? I'm glad to hear that. I thought they'd never been able to do nothing for it a-tall.'

" 'Oh, yes.'

" 'You know, Doctor, I believes I got a real way to cure consumption if you could try it out.'

" 'If you have, then you're a made man.'

" 'Is?'

" 'Absolutely — nothing you can't have — automobiles, yachts, summer houses, hardwood floors, oil-burning furnaces—'

" 'Um, um, what is a yacht, Doctor?'

" 'A pleasure ship that sails on the sea.'

" 'Go 'way from here! Don't get me nigh to them deep waters.'

" 'Well, go ahead and tell me about your cure.'

" 'Well, suh, it's good old kairsene.'

" 'Kerosene?'

" 'Yessuh, boss. You just take the man, him that's a-barking and a-harking with tubuckylosis and stick him in a barrel of kairsene up to his chin and let him set there. And the kairsene soaks in and in till it reaches all that gorm of germs, and they come out of his mouth and fly away like a swarm of wing-gnats. No, suh, they cain't stand kairsene. And he rises out of there a newmade man.'

" 'Yes, I suppose he would if it didn't kill him.'

" 'At this Handsome threw up his head, gave two or three dog-yelping laughs and went ambling on up the alley. 'You're right about that, Doc,' he called back, 'but they kill him anyway, don't they? People sure is smart, but they ain't too smart.'

" 'The doctor looked after Handsome a moment, hunched his shoulders and went on fixing the wire that pulled music out of the air. 'He's certainly a character, isn't he, Mr. Mac?' he said to me. 'Pity he's stunted in his mind.'

" 'Just then the cook came out bringing my empty meal bag, and I didn't have to reply.'

as *sturdy* as an oak

*sty*

An inflamed swelling of the eyelid. One way of curing a sty is to rub it nine times with a gold ring or a piece of gold.

*substance*

The heart of the matter, the main points. "Well, the substance of the speech was — we ought to forget the Civil War and get on with our business of building for the future."

He parts with the *substance* for the shadow.

If at first you don't *succeed*, try and try again.

Nothing *succeeds* like success.

*such a matter as*

An indefinite time. "Well, he was gone such a matter as two weeks or more."

*suck*

A swampy or miry place. "My cow got lost, and I found her down there in the suck."

*suck egg dog*

A low-down character.

*I'll be a suck egg dog! (mule)*

A mild interjection.

*go suck eggs*

A term of derogatory dismissal.

*sucker*

A common freshwater fish, also a dolt or one who is easily gulled.

*suck the hind tit*

To be deprived, to have the worst of anything, be discriminated against. "That's the way the North kept the South sucking the hind tit and no wonder trouble broke out."

*suck the lemon dry*

To get out of a person or a subject all that is possible.

*go suck yourself*

A vulgar term of dismissal.

*suds*

Draft beer.

*Suffer* the little children to come unto me and forbid them not for such is the kingdom of heaven.

'Tis better to *suffer* wrong than to do wrong.

*sugar*

A term of warm endearment, affection. "She likes me but she won't give me no sugar."

*sugarberry (hackberry)*

The Indians used these berries to cure syphilis which they caught from the white man, but the berries didn't prevail.

*sugar daddy*

A lecherous old fellow with much means by which he is able to purchase the affection of some young girl.

*sugar gourd*

In the old days a gourd with an opening in it was kept in the kitchen to hold sugar.

*sugar lump*

A sweetheart, also a term of endearment.

*sugar-mouth*

A sweet talker, a deceitful person, a sycophant.

*sugar tit*

An artificial tit made by using a bit of cloth folded in the shape of a nipple with a mixture of sugar and butter inside it. It was used as a pacifier. I remember the first picture I wrote for Warner Brothers in Hollywood. I had a scene in the cotton patch where the Negro women were picking cotton and their babies were lying on the blankets in the shade, each one pacified with its sugar tit. We had a time getting these sugar tits to work and finally had to scrap the scene because the babies, not used to this sort of tit, kept up such an ungodly row that Director Mike Curtiz finally said, "To hell with them." So we took the babies out, paid the mammies off and went on with the picture. The term more recently is used to refer to welfare aid.

*suggans*

Blankets or heavy comforters.

*Suicide Club*

A young men's club formed in Wilmington in the latter part of the 18th century, 1780-90. The members, some sixteen to twenty, were "according to tradition" avowed Atheists and held strange and secret meetings at which pagan rites were indulged in. It was said that among their mockeries was



one of the Lord's Supper where much drinking and carousing took place. But the report was that this proved too much for the patience of the Almighty, or Whoever or Whatever was offended, and in less than a year twelve of the sixteen in attendance took their own lives in remorse.

*suicide root*

A root which in its wild growth wraps itself around another root or the body of the plant or tree and slowly kills it.

*suit*

Dress, attire, toilette, an arrangement. "You've fixed me a nice suit of hair."

*suits to a tee*

Very satisfactory.

*sulky*

A light two-wheeled cart suitable for one person, although in our neighborhood the boys who owned sulkies used to love to get their girls to ride with them, and no wonder, for they could sit close together. And sometimes in a rough place his arm could go around her for safety's sake.

*sull*

To sulk, to be sullen.

*sulphur*

A good vermin chaser and especially fine for the itch.

When we were young, my brother and I contracted the itch. We had a little shed room on our back porch and we shut ourselves up in there, lighted a tin pan of dry sulphur, took off our clothes and went through the purification process, sitting on the bed or walking around and letting the fumes pour up and around us. It was a common belief in the Valley that this would work a sure cure. Every moment or so we'd have to open the door a crack, breathe in some fresh air and shut it again. After an hour or so we could endure no more, and we got our clothes on as best we could and burst out of the room, wheezing and squealing like persons dying of the asthma. We had to lie around most of the next day to get our strength back. But our itch was cured.

For the next couple of weeks the house was so filled with the smell of sulphur that the whole family had to sleep with all doors open.

*smooth sumach*

This species of shrub grows in rocky or barren soils throughout the Valley and for that matter in almost all of North America. It is used as a cure for many diseases, claims being made it is good for gonorrhea, diarrhea, scrofula and fevers. The berries are supposed to be good for sore mouth and for gargling. In the case of burns, take equal parts of the beaten root mixed

with equal parts of milk and water, thicken it with flour and apply it on freshly burned places, and, so the saying goes, not a scar will be left.

If you can sing in the *summer*, you may dance in the winter.

No *summer* without a winter.

*summer freckles*

Freckles that appear from exposure to the hot sun in summer.

*summerset*

Somersault.

*Summerville*

One of the many perished villages and towns in the Valley. This Summerville was built up on a ridge just west of Lillington and was in a good way of becoming a summer resort for the planters who were beginning to build houses there and bring their families up out of the fever-infested lowlands for the hot summer months. The establishment of Lillington near the river finally caused the perishing of this old town. There are still one or two houses left to denote something of its spread and its aristocracy. The old restored Tirzah Church remains a bright landmark.

*sump*

A puddle of water, a dirty water hole.

*sump'n*

Something.

*to sun*

To spread or put out in the sun.

The *sun* is the poor man's clock.

Where the *sun* does not enter, the doctor does.

He maketh his *sun* to rise on the evil and the good.

*sunball*

A weather gall, or atmospheric duplicate sun, usually above the sun.

*sunbeam*

A term used for a beautiful or precious little child or favorite daughter. In the old Pleasant Union Church we used to have a song we would sing on Children's Day. The little girls in their bright frocks would sing this in their little high-pitched voices, sounding sweetly to the ears of their doting parents, "We are little sunbeams."

*sunbonnet*

An old-timey bonnet with a high brim and with a ruffled back for protection

from the sun. Much the same as slat bonnet.

Come day, go day,  
God send *Sunday*.

### *Sunday*

The day of rest.

The first chapter of Genesis in recounting God's creation of the world says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him — male and female created he them." "And he gave him dominion over all the earth and every living thing that moveth on the earth....And God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day....And he rested on the seventh day from all his works." Thus, our commemorative Sunday as a day of rest and worship.

Of course, Sunday in the Valley as elsewhere was not only a day of spiritual communion and enjoyment of church worship, it was also an occasion for social communion, neighbor to neighbor, a time to get news of one another's doings. Saturday evening at our house as elsewhere was a time for the weekly bath in and of the big tin tub. Also early Sunday morning the men of the family were busy shaving and brushing up. Then off to church.

I'm sure the elders got more pleasure out of Sunday morning church service than we children did. Our time for joy came in the afternoon when we could play games like "I Spy," "Stealing Sticks," "Prison Base" and so on. But we were always conscious that this was the sabbath day and we mustn't be riotous. Sometimes we would forget, and I can still see my father — who was a gentle understanding man — come out where we were playing and say, "Listen, children, you'll have to quiet down — you're making too much racket here on the Lord's day." And then we would quit shouting and squealing so loudly in our enjoyment for a while. But soon we'd be back as loud as ever and get another reprimanding.

In those days hunting, fishing, baseball or even marbles, and of course all games of chance, were forbidden. But with the coming of the first world war and the going of thousands of boys from the South into the service a different valuation of customs took place. The constrictive blue laws disappeared. Now the day is pretty much wide open with baseball, football — all sports — finding Sunday one of their biggest days for profit.

But still the churches continue strong in their morning services. It's mainly in the afternoon that hell breaks loose — wide open grocery stores, golf, auto racing, etc., etc.

### *Sunday clothes*

Dress-up clothes.

*Sunday gal*

A flirt, a deceiver. There's a good rhyme about it.

A *Sunday gal* is fair  
But a weekday gal will wear.

*Sunday-go-to-meeting duds*

Best clothes, party clothes.

*Sunday School*

Sunday School has become the custom throughout the Valley and is usually held an hour or two ahead of the regular preaching hour. Different teachers have different age groups, and these groups are instructed in the Scriptures. We used to have what we called quarterlies, a sort of synopsis or textbook usually in pamphlet form with the lessons arranged for each Sunday. I enjoyed studying a quarterly and being able to answer up sharply in the Sunday School class. In fact I used to teach in the Sunday School, teaching the men's group, but finally when I got completely converted by Darwin and others, I lost my enthusiasm and finally faded out of the picture.

*Sunday School cards*

Little 3"x 4" cards, usually illustrated with the figure of Christ or some other Biblical character and given out to the "little folks" Sunday School class for their knowledge and instruction. The cards often had catechism questions printed on them with a space for answering. I loved them and tried to be ready with my glib answers ahead of everybody else when Sunday came. My half-sister Alda (Allie to us) taught the class and did it well. "Who was the oldest man?" Quick answer — "Methusaleh." "How old was he when he died?" "Over nine hundred years old." A grunt of disbelief from some unregenerate four-year-old. "Who was the meekest man?" "Moses." "Who was the strongest man?" "Samson." And so on.

*Sunday suit*

The one suit of clothes kept for Sunday wear.

*sundog*

A mock sun.

*sundown*

Sunset.

*sun drawing water*

Often in summer when an afternoon shower was light enough to show streaks of rain falling across the face of the sun behind, we would — or someone would — call out, "Look, the sun's drawing water!" Or maybe another would say, "The devil's beating his wife!" I've never been able to find out

the source of either of these old sayings.

### *sunflower*

The plant grows from the arctic circle to the tropics and is especially prolific in the Valley. The dried seeds make wonderful bird feed. I have known the evening grosbeaks to be so greedy over the seed furnished in our bird feeder that their catalogued date of departure is delayed for weeks. They must have a pathological difficulty as to will to migrate, whatever the easy pickings — the welfare. But instinct always wins and they finally depart, and we look forward to next year when they can come again.

There are other and numerous uses for the plant — for chickenfeed, cure for dysentery and bladder infection and so on. The Indians used oil from the seed to grease their heavy hair.

The flowers are round, with petals yellow like the sun, but as to name, it is accounted for by the fact that, when in bloom, its "countenance" shows its adoration of the sun by turning toward it on its rising and turning with it as the hours proceed toward sunset. On cloudy days its devotion is somewhat marred, though it does the best it can, however feebly. Thomas Moore, the Irish poet (1779-1852), has a lovely reference to this in his beautiful lyric, "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms," set to an old Scotch melody.

"The heart that has truly loved never forgets,  
But as truly loves on to the close,  
As the sunflower turns on her god when he sets  
The same look which she turned when he rose."

### *sunny side*

Optimistic attitude. "She always shows her sunny side when company comes."

### *sunny-side up eggs*

Eggs fried with the yoke atop and unbroken.

### *sun pain*

Headaches caused by exposure to the sun.

The *sunshine* follows the rain.

### *sunshiny*

Cheerful, good-hearted, radiant even.

### *sun time*

Time gauged by the sun. "I run my sawmill, boys, by sun time — start sawing at sunup and knock off at sunset."

*sun to sun*

From sunup to sunset.

*supper for the dead*

An old folk practice among the Negroes by which the dead could be summoned from the grave and give information about their taking off, or other matters, so it was believed. A table would be set as usual for the family, and a plate, knife, fork, cup and chair placed at the table for the dead one. Food would be put on the plate too. Then through some incantations or hocus-pocus carried on by a conjure doctor, the dead would come up out of the darkness and take a seat at the table and begin to eat.

I wrote a play on this subject, telling the story of a Negro girl, Miny, who had been found drowned in a creek, and old Queenie, a voodoo woman, and her two snake-headed daughters, Lil and Fury, came to the girl's parents and set out a supper for the dead so they could find out the nature of her death. The mother had already begun to suspect her husband, Miny's father, as having had something to do with it. Old Queenie then began to burn her mystic herbs in a bowl on the table while she and her daughters did a queer dance around them, chanting the while—

“God befo’ me,  
God behime me,  
God be wid me.”

And then as the smoke of the herbs continued to rise in the room, old Queenie chanted forth her spell language—

“Feathers, cakes and beans and cawn,  
Thumb of de bastard son jist bawn,  
Spider, wasp and field-mice tongue,  
Eye of a man de gallus hung.

“Devil’s snuff and de dried dog brains,  
’Oman’s scabs dat died in chains,  
Ground calf-tongue and de black cat’s bone—  
Come up, Miny, git yo’ own.

“Black snake ile and rain-crow aig  
Puts de strength in the ghostes laig,  
Make um power of muscle and bone—  
Come up, Miny, hyuh’s yo’ own.”

The ghost of the little girl Miny appeared and indicated that her father there had ruined her and because of him she had committed suicide. On learning this, the wife Vonie, mother of the girl, grabbed the shotgun down

from above the door and killed her husband Fess, who had seduced his own daughter.

The play won a prize of first place in a New York competition, but according to my friend Barrett H. Clark, the producers “found it so full of violence that they wouldn’t stage it.” I often ponder this matter of violence in drama. Shakespeare certainly filled most of his plays with it. “Out, vile jelly!” etc.

as *supple* as a cat

He who *sups* with the devil needs a long spoon.

*suption (soption)*

Barbecue sauce, gravy, or grease or gooey liquid. “Gimme some more of that suption to make this barbecue hot enough.”

as *sure* as day

as *sure* as death

as *sure* as fate

as *sure* as hell

as *sure* as night follows day

as *sure* as shooting

as *sure* as the sun rises

as *sure* as the sun sets

as *sure* as the sun shines

Better *sure* than sorry.

Look beneath the *surface*.

*the surrender*

A milestone in Southern history — marking the surrender of General Lee at Appomattox, April 9, 1865. “No, Mr. Green, I ain’t that old. I was born one year after the surrenduh.”

*Survival* of the fittest is a law of nature.

*suspicion*

To suspect. “He suspicioned there was something wrong with them slaughtered hogs.”

*Suspicion* haunts the guilty-minded.

*suster*

Sister.

*sut*

Soot.

*swag*

Boodle, stolen goods.

*'swage (assuage)*

To shrink. "Wait till the swelling 'swages down and then we can see just what's wrong."

*SWAK*

Initials sometimes put on envelopes indicating "Sealed with a kiss."

*swallow*

To accept, to believe. "He swallowed the man's story, hook, line and sinker."

One *swallow* does not make a spring.

One *swallow* does not make a summer.

*swamp angel*

The veery, a shy bird of beautiful melody, much like a small thrush in color and shape.

Mr. Mac, the Valley historian, says that the swamp angel actually is the thrush and its beautiful singing in the late summer afternoons in the deep cool woods is the most beautiful thing he ever heard.

*swamp dogwood*

A shrub found in the low moist woods and along the banks of the streams in the Valley. It is valuable as a cure for many diseases, and Burlage and Jacobs say that the Cree Indians used it for coughs and as a stimulant and a tonic. Its long stems were once used to make baskets.

*swamp mallow*

Called by some a marsh mallow. It grows in the borders of marshes throughout the Valley. Seeds of this swamp mallow make a good cordial and once were used for acid stomach.

The *swan* sings when death comes.

*I swan!*

A mild interjection, meaning I swear.

Don't *swap* horses in midstream.



*swap knives*

A game much indulged in by school boys in the old days. Sometimes the swap was made "with no questions asked." I remember once swapping knives blindly with a fellow and the knife I got had no blades in it at all.

*swarm up (over)*

To attack viciously. "He'll swarm all over you if you make him mad."

A *swarm* of bees in May  
Is worth a load of hay.  
A *swarm* in July  
Is not worth a fly.  
(A proverb rhyme.)

*swaybacked*

A horse with a dip in its back.

*swave*

Climb. "He swaved right up that tree."

*Swear* not at all.

If you *swear* while fishing, you will catch no fish.

*I swear*

A mild interjection.

*swears* like a pirate (sailor)

In the *sweat* of thy face shalt thou eat bread.

*sweat bees*

Bees or other insects hovering around a sweaty person.

A *sweating* glass of water means rain.

*sweep*

There's a superstition that if one sweeps under the bed of a sick person, that person will die.

Everyone should *sweep* in front of his own door.

*sweep pole*

A long pole, usually of resilient white oak or black gum sapling, used as a fulcrum with grabs attached for lifting logs from the ground and carrying them underneath a log wagon to the sawmill.

*sweep under the rug*

To hide away a subject, to cover it up, to deceive by outer appearances when "under the rug" lies the truth.

as *sweet* as a flower

as *sweet* as an angel

as *sweet* as a rose

as *sweet* as honey

as *sweet* as pie

as *sweet* as sugar

Every *sweet* has its sour.

so *sweet* that butter would melt in his mouth

***“Sweet Adeline”***

An old sentimental song, especially a favorite of barbershop quartet groups.

***sweet alyssum***

A fragrant herbaceous plant found in the Valley where it has become naturalized and is a favorite in the home gardens. There used to be a legend that if it were dried and beat into powder, it was a good cure for hydrophobia, also for hiccoughs.

***“Sweet and Low”***

The famous poem of Tennyson set to music, and sung by many a mother as a lullaby. The phrase also means seductive talk, persuasive argument.

***sweet balsam***

Rabbit tobacco.

***sweet bay***

One of the most decorated and beautiful trees growing in the Valley. The sweet bay is seldom found in the upper reaches of the Valley. The leaves, the berries and the bark were good for poulticing sores or swelling joints, and a tea made from boiling the roots was used for children's colic. The tea was also good for gallstones, liver and spleen troubles in grown-ups. The tree was supposed to have a mystic power of protection in that neither witch nor devil, thunder nor lightning would harm one where sweet bay was planted. I have got a couple planted near my house in Chatham County close by Chapel Hill, but I didn't plant them for fear of the witches, the devil or thunder, but hoping to smell their sweet blossoms. They have responded to that hope but obviously with some effort.

***“In the Sweet Bye and Bye”***

A favorite church hymn which depicts the joys to be experienced by the Christian souls in yonder world. This has brought untold comfort to many a Valley soul, as well as elsewhere.

*sweet enough to eat*

Usually said of a baby or one's sweetheart.

*sweeten the pot*

To add to the ante in a card game.

*sweeten up*

To mollify, to flatter excessively.

*sweet flag*

The calamus plant. The root is supposed to be good for all sorts of stomach troubles.

I remember old Miss Gaskins who used to come and stay with us on a visit, how she would carry some of the sweet flag root wrapped up in her old handkerchief. And sometimes as she sat by the winter fire, she would take out the root in her trembling hands, break off a piece, put it in her toothless mouth, and sit there sucking it and staring peacefully at the fire. The root was supposed to be good for the preservation of the teeth and as an aphrodisiac, though too late to do old Miss Minty any good in either case.

*"Sweet Genevieve"*

As long as I can remember this has been a great favorite in the Valley. Our male quartet used to make the night ring with it as we walked or rode home "under the silvery moon" from some neighborhood frolic or cornshucking. The words were written in 1869 by George Cooper, friend and associate of Stephen Foster and for whose "Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming" and other songs he wrote the lyrics. The melody of "Sweet Genevieve" was composed by Henry Tucker, also of the Civil War period and fame. The ballad tells the true story of a young man's only sweetheart dying a few months after the two were married.

"O Genevieve, I'd give the world  
 To live again the lovely past!  
 The rose of youth was dew-impearled  
 But now it withers in the blast.  
 I see thy face in ev'ry dream.  
 My waking thoughts are all of thee.  
 Thy glance is in the starry beam  
 That falls along the summer sea."

Chorus

"O Genevieve, sweet Genevieve,  
 The days may come, the days may go,  
 But still the hands of mem'ry weave  
 The blissful dreams of long ago."

And how in close harmony our quartet would squeeze out a beautiful minor and hold it on “But still the hands of mem’ry weave,” even sometimes tears filling our sympathetic eyes.

*sweet gum tree*

This tree grows prolifically in the Valley throughout its entire length and up into the edge of the mountains. We children used to chop gashes in these trees and then later get the exuded gum and use it for chewing gum. The leaves of the tree are very aromatic and, if dried and beaten up and mixed with whiskey and taken regularly, were very good for irritable stomach. The dried balls of the tree with their little spikes were often used as decoration items on homemade furniture.

*sweetie pie*

A term of endearment.

*sweet lips*

An especially loving woman.

*sweet mouth*

To court, to infatuate, praise to undoing. “She put the sweet mouth on him and he was a goner.”

*sweet potato*

The common long potato as contrasted with Irish potato. A main staple of food for the Valley people. Also the juice from the vines was used as a mild children’s purgative. During the hard reconstruction times many of the Scotsmen in the Valley dried the potatoes and used the dried crumbs to make coffee, and also used potatoes to make mucilage and starch.

*sweet shrub (sweet betsy)*

An odoriferous shrub. Carrying one of the buds in one’s pocket was supposed to make the girls love you.

*sweet spirits of nitre!*

An exclamation.

A woman’s *sweet talk*  
And a plentiful table  
Will hold any man  
That’s worthwhile and able.  
(A folk proverb.)

*sweet tooth*

A penchant for sweet things.

*sweet William*

A very popular garden flower.

*Sweet words* butter no parsnips.

*swell*

Fine, dandy.

*swelled up*

Angry, sullen.

*swell head*

An egotist.

*sweltry*

Sultry.

*swig*

A small dram, a small drink of liquor, also as a verb. "He don't do nothing but lay around the house and swig whiskey."

*I swigger!*

A mild interjection.

as *swift* as a bird

as *swift* as a bullet

as *swift* as an arrow

as *swift* as an eagle

as *swift* as thought

*swimmy-headed*

Slightly dizzy.

*swims* like a duck

*swims* like a fish

Cast not your pearls before *swine*.

*swing*

To handle, take care of, be able to control. "I haven't got enough money to swing that deal."

*swinge*

Singe.

*swinging-limb*

The low-hanging limb on a tree, especially used by children to swing from.

Also a favorite hitching place for horses and mules at a picnic or church gathering.

*swing it*

To make swing music or move to its rhythm.

*swingletree*

Singletree, a bar hitched to a plow or wagon with rings at each end to which trace chains would be attached for the horse or mule to pull. We also had doubletrees for a double team.

*“Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”*

To me one of the most beautiful of all Negro spirituals. It was common property among the field workers in the Valley, both black and white, but segregation set up again in the churches, and it belonged then to the Negroes only. I have never heard it sung in a white church, but soon no doubt it will be heard there too. I paraphrased the title somewhat for naming a Negro musical play I wrote for New York back in 1934, though the message remained the same — “Roll Sweet Chariot.”

“Swing low, sweet chariot,  
Coming for to carry me home,  
Swing low, sweet chariot,  
Coming for to carry me home.

“I looked over Jordan and what did I see  
Coming for to carry me home.  
A band of angels coming after me,  
Coming for to carry me home.

“If you get there before I do,  
Coming for to carry me home,  
Just tell ’em I’m a-coming too,  
Coming for to carry me home.

“I ain’t been to heaben but I been told—  
The streets of heaben is paved with gold—

“I’m sometimes up and sometimes down—  
My head is almost to the ground—”

Like most all of the spirituals the author-composer is unknown. Maybe it grew bit by bit from one worker to another in the long cotton field hours or from some equally long tending of a sick or dying person.

*swink*

Shrink.

*a switch*

A bunch of artificial hair or the lady's own saved in a hair dish and used to fill out a hairdo.

*switchblade knife*

A pocketknife whose long blade flies open when a spring is pressed. It is a dangerous weapon in the hand of an irate man. These knives used to be more common in the Valley than they are now, and in the old days many a man carried one to have in readiness at public gatherings and especially at political rallies where in the heat of politics he might receive an insult or some question be raised as to his honor or character.

Dr. John Giles had his switchblade with him one day at a political speaking in Lillington. Afterwards he met up with Roderick Massey and the two got to arguing as to whether Andrew Johnson should have been impeached. Dr. John said he shouldn't and Roderick said he should. Hot words began to pass between them. Now Dr. John as everybody knew had a terrible high temper, and in a rage he out with his switchblade and gave Roderick a rake across the stomach that dang nigh ruined him, as Mr. Mac, the Valley historian, recounted the incident to me. Roderick fell to the ground, and of course the neighbors rushed up to try to do something. "Go get Dr. McBryde!" somebody shouted. Then somebody else said he had seen the doctor going to Lumberton and he wouldn't be back till tomorrow. "Then drive over the river and get Dr. McNeill here in a hurry, for God's sake!" another one said. But another one spoke up and said that Dr. McNeill had gone to Raleigh to a medical meeting — and that's what Mrs. McNeill said.

So there was no doctor left anywhere. Then all eyes turned toward Dr. John, who was putting up his wiped knife and straightening his rumpled clothes. He looked back at them and they looked at him. Finally, he let out a loud "Goddamn!", pulled off his hat and stomped it in the dirt, and reached for his bag. His Negro boy, Attorney-at-law, called Turney for short, who had been holding the bag while the doctor had done his cutting, handed it to him. There was nothing else to be done, so Dr. Giles squatted down by the wounded man and went to work on him. They say he was so mad he cried and cussed as he sewed. "If I'd a known this was to happen, Rod," he blubbered, "I wouldn't a-cut you so deep nor so wide." Then Roderick started to argue with him again, saying Johnson was a traitor and ought to be hanged, and he'd stand to it till he died. At this Dr. John lifted up his big hog needle, the tears streaming down his cheeks, and said, "One more word out of you, Rod, and while I got you down I'll sew up your lips and thread 'em to your nose so damned tight you'll never breathe again, let alone argue." Rod saw that he meant it. So he lay still while the doctor sewed, and said no more. He recovered all right, and later he and Dr. John

were good friends. In fact he was one of the pallbearers that helped put the old doctor there where he sleeps in Tirzah churchyard.

*I be switched!*

A mild interjection.

*switches*

Little long twigs usually taken from the new sprouts of the spirea bush. "Better obey your parents, children, or Santa Claus will bring you a bag of switches on Christmas — he did for Martin Matthews."

*switching*

A light spanking.

*swivel*

Shrivel. "There stood that little boy in the cold, his lips all swiveled up and blue."

*swivet*

A hurry, turmoil, nervous haste, the fidgets.

*swizzled*

Fooled, deceived, cheated.

*swole*

Past tense of swell.

*swoom*

Swoon.

Put up thy *sword*.

They that live by the *sword* shall perish by the *sword*.

*swordsman*

A cocksman, a ladies' man, a sport. "Everybody knowed that Charlie was a swordsman and that's how come he got killed by that jealous husband."

*swunk*

Shrunk.

*syllabub (sillabub)*

In the old days this was a special Christmas drink in the Valley. Even deacons in the church and sworn teetotalers felt that a bit of syllabub was allowable at this religious holiday time. The drink was made by mixing a little liquor (preferably corn) with a rich, almost custard-thick cream and sweetened.

*syphilis cure*

The fruit of the sugarberry tree eaten heavily was one of the many promising cures. The Indians had faith in this practice as a cure after they'd caught the disease from the white man, or woman.



# T

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*tabby*

A female cat.

*tabernickle*

Tabernacle.

*tablefull*

A crowd.

*tabookit*

A sound made by the hooves of a galloping horse.

*keep tabs on*

To keep an eye on, look after, be responsible for.

*tackies*

Poor Southern whites.

*tackle*

To attempt, to try, to make an effort at.

*tacky*

Common, vulgar. It is used both as an adjective and as a noun.

In bad taste. "That girl came to the party in one of the tackiest dresses that I ever saw."

*mill tacky*

A cotton-mill poor white, a common worker, usually looked down on by the farmers, even tenant farmers.

*tacky party*

A costume party where everyone comes dressed in "tacky" and outlandish clothes, usually old clothes.

*tad*

A little child, usually refers to boys. Also a small amount, a bit.

*taddick*

A little bit, small amount. "Hand me that taddick of wool."

*Tag*

One of the most popular of all children's games. There are a number of varieties — Squat Tag, Turn Tag, Wood Tag, Iron Tag, etc. One child is chosen "It" by a counting-out rhyme, and he chases the other players. "Safety" in each game is to touch or do what players agree upon. In Squat Tag, for example, "It" must catch a player before he squats and hold him long enough to count one-two-three. Then the one caught becomes "It." But if the chased one squats before he is tagged, he is safe. Players are granted only three squats. In Turn Tag, "It" must turn and chase anyone who crosses between him and the one being chased. In Iron Tag, the pursued one is always safe as long as he is touching iron before being tagged.

*tag along*

To follow dispiritedly, but doggedly.

*tail*

A following detective.

The backside.

A screwing, sexual intercourse. I heard the following at a sawmill once.

"I was in town last night and I got me a piece of tail."

"You did?"

"Yeh, man, and I mean tail."

"Um, and what'd it cost you?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"Yeh, nothing. Kinfolks."

Cut a dog's *tail* off and put it under the steps, and the dog won't run away from home anymore.

*tailband*

The crupper.

*his tail between his legs*

Humiliated, shamefaced.

*tailboard*

A cross board at the end of a cart or wagon body which can be removed for loading or unloading.

*tail dragging*

Loafing, working half-heartedly. "I'm going to turn him off come Saturday — he's just too tail dragging."

*tail end*

The exact end.

*tail feathers*

Pretensions, false manners, highfalutin airs.

You've got to get hold of more than the *tail feathers* if you want to catch the chicken.

*tail in a split*

To be in a difficult situation.

One of the Valley doctors told me that his tail was in a split one time. Well, of course, doctors get their tails in splits many times, but this was a particular time and happening. He was at a convention, he said, in a distant city, when a Valley boy, a young man, came to see him. He knew the fellow and there was some confidential talk between them. This young man told the doctor that he had caught venereal disease in the town while he was away from home. This job would soon be ended and he was going to have to go back home, and he didn't know what to do about his young wife. The doctor suggested that he try to get another job in the town and let his wife know that his work was keeping him there longer than he thought. In the meantime he should get himself cured. The doctor said he did. When the doctor got back home, he was called on shortly by the young wife herself, and after much hemming and hawing, she let him know that she, too, had caught venereal disease. "I've been a plumb fool," she wept, "messing around with that low-down man," and she told who it was. "And he's ruined me, ruined me," she said. The doctor comforted her and started treating her. Then she heard with great joy that her husband had been delayed and was continuing in the distant town. So by the time the young man came home she was cured up. "Yessir," said the doctor, "for a while my tail was in a split, and theirs were too. But it worked out all right, and I reckon neither of them ever knew about the other. Before long they began to have some children. They've got four now and they're getting along well — a happy family, though two of the older ones have mighty bad eye trouble and I'm treating them."

The old saying "tail in a split" always reminds me of our possum hunting custom in the Valley. If we caught a possum, we'd cut down a little sapling — usually a white oak one — and cut it off to about a five- or six-foot length. We'd slit open one end of the sapling, insert the possum's tail in the slit, and let it close up tight again, thus holding him captive by the tail. Then with the pole over our shoulders and the captive possum sitting humbly on

it, held by his tail, we'd march proudly home with our game. He'd be put in a wired-over pen and fed persimmons and boiled sweet potatoes for a few weeks, and then served up as a special and delectable food. I never found it so. To me cooked possum is about eighty percent grease. Still I am thankful for the old folk sayings I got from the creature, and I try as much as possible not to get my tail in a split. Naturally, I don't always succeed.

*tailings*

Seconds, inferior quality, the chaffy materials that are blown away by the fan in threshing.

*tail on fire*

To be in a great hurry or fiercely angry.

*tail over the dashboard*

In high spirits.

*tail up*

Resolute, optimistic, much the same as tail over the dashboard.

*tain't*

It ain't.

*tairpin*

Terrapin.

*take*

To get ready to do, to plan, to get set. "Now the government will take and cut your pension down to nothing."

To be effective. "The salt didn't take and every one of my hams sp'iled in the warm weather spell."

You must *take* the fat with the lean.

*take a back seat*

To retire from the limelight, be demoted.

*to take a bleed (leak)*

To urinate.

*to take a crack at*

To try, to attempt, to make an effort.

*take after*

Resemble. "When I was a little boy, more than one neighbor would look at me and say to my father, 'That boy takes after his grandfather Bill Byrd, don't he?' "

*take and*

An expression of emphasis. "He took and went over the creek to get a pot."

*take and do it*

Get busy and do, act resolutely. "Don't talk so much, just take and do it."

*take a pen in hand*

To write in a bombastic or over-inflated style.

*take a powder*

To run away, to quit a job suddenly.

*take a shine to*

To like.

*take back*

To recant.

*take care of it*

To wind a matter up, finish, conclude. "That about takes care of it."

*take for a ride*

To cheat, to lead on deceptively. "He promised to pay that money back, but he took me for a ride."

To be killed. "They found him crumpled under a pile of lumber — the gang had taken him for a ride."

*take in*

To assemble, to begin. "School took in last Tuesday."

To cheat. "I got took in on that deal, yessiree!"

*take in the town*

To go out on the town for a big time.

*take it from me*

Accept my word for truth, believe me. "Take it from me — that Jack Tufts just won't do."

*take it out on*

To treat another spitefully or abusively. "He took his disappointment out on me and I wasn't to blame at all."

*taken*

Past tense of take. "He taken his gun in hand."

*take notice*

An emphatic statement of observing. "That baby began to take notice before he was six months old."

*take off*

To flee, run, leave.

To mimic. "Earsie Matthews can take off Mr. Billy Green to a fare-ye-well."

*take on*

To assume a task, to make a to-do over.

*take one down a peg*

To lower one's pride, to discomfit.

*take one's foot in one's hand*

To make a decision. "He tuk his foot in his hand and lit out for home."

*take out*

To unfasten, to unhitch. "Take out the mules and feed 'em, the sun's gone down."

*take sick*

To become sick, usually suddenly.

*take stock in*

To believe in, to give credence to. "I don't take a bit of stock in what he says these days."

*take the bridle off*

To cut loose, to go on a tear.

*take the cake*

To win the prize, to win first place, to be tops.

*take the rag off the bush*

To outdo, out-lie, over-exaggerate.

*take to*

To run. "He took to the woods when he saw that bear."

To like. "That baby took to old man Lee as soon as he saw him."

*take to the cleaners.*

To ream, to bankrupt, to steal everything.

*take up*

To loiter, to waste time, to hang about. "That old sorry hound dog has took up here and I can't run her off."

*take up for*

To defend, espouse a cause, to support. "I'll take up for the young folks any day."

*take up with*

To become a pal of, a companion to.

*taking out fire*

There are many Valley superstitions about easing a burn or taking out fire. I knew an old Negro man who said he could do it. He had a queer outlandish mumble and wordless song which accompanied the pantomime of his passing his hands over the burnt place. "Now, Missy, you'll feel better right away."

*tale*

Malicious gossip. "He told a tale about her."

*Talk is easy.*

*Talk* of the devil and his imps will appear.

Don't *talk* while fishing, for the fish won't bite.

*talk a blue streak*

Excessively talkative.

*talk back*

To respond impertinently, sassily.

*Talking* comes by nature, silence comes by wisdom.

*talk the hinges off the door*

Excessively garrulous.

*talk through one's hat*

Speak foolishly.

*talk turkey*

Straight talk, stern advice, a laying down of the law.

as *tall* as a church steeple

as *tall* as a haystack

*tallow*

The cooked and rendered fat of animals. Tallow is good for all sorts of colds and coughs when smeared on the chest and rubbed in. Also it is good to soften up hard brogan shoes in winter or any kind of leather goods. The folk superstition in the Valley used to run that when one's chest was well-greased with tallow, no witches or harmful spirits could come nigh enough to hurt.

*tall tales*

Wild and imaginative narratives.

*Tall trees* catch much wind.

It is the *tall trees* the lightning strikes most.

as *tame* as a kitten

*tan*

To whip, spank. "If you don't behave yourself, boy, I'll tan your hide good."

*tanglefoot*

A specially prepared sticky paper to catch flies. We used to have them spread all about our house, and yet the flies increased.

*tank up*

To drink to excess, to get drunk. "He goes down to that filling station ever' Sad'dy night and tanks up, then comes home drunk and beats the children."

*tansies*

Cakes made of eggs and tansy leaves and eaten during Lent.

*tansy*

A wild flower that grows some two to four feet high and is plentiful throughout the Valley. It is aromatic and bitter of taste and according to report has been used in medicine since the Middle Ages. It often decks the roadside in summer with its yellow flat-topped flower clusters. In the Roman Catholic Church tansy (from the Greek word meaning immortality) typifies the bitter herbs which were to be eaten or chewed at the Easter season.

*tantrabogus*

A frightful monster, a folklore creature of unimaginable fearfulness, the devil himself.

*tantrum*

A fit of high temper, hysterics.

*tap*

To choose, to designate, as to tap one for a fraternity membership.

*Tap Out* (Clap Out)

A children's game of chase, also a young people's courting game. Any number can play this game. A ring is formed, with the players holding hands. Sometimes they march around singing a song — any song they choose. "It" moves around outside the ring and taps a chosen person, usually a boy tapping a girl and vice versa. The one tapped then chases the tapper around the ring. If the boy catches the girl, he is allowed a kiss, and if the girl catches the boy — and this most often happens, for the boys usually slow down for the purpose of being caught — then she can allow herself to be kissed. Many a marriage has begun this way. And oh, how my heart used to ache



when my favorite girl would pass me by and tap some no 'count fellow farther down the ring. The game is much like Drop the Handkerchief.

***“Ta-ra-ra Boom-der-é”***

A popular song of the old days. We boys used to have our own version which began—

“Ta-ra-ra boom-ray-dee,  
I got bumps all over me.”

***tared***

Tired.

***tares***

Deductions or tolls made from the gross weight of a commodity to be sold.

Also any weeds or foreign growth in a field of wheat.

Sins, evil deeds for good, as given in the 13th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.”

Don't sow tares, the Scripture commands.

***Tar Heel***

A native North Carolinian. The name also applies to different athletic teams — football, basketball, tennis, wrestling, etc. — from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the original and main campus.

There are many “legends” that give accounts of the origin of the name. One is that when Lord Cornwallis' soldiers crossed the Tar River by wading it during the Revolutionary War, they found their feet sticky with tar that had been dumped into the river from the nearby tar-pitch-and-turpentine activities of the settlers. The word got around that anyone wading in North Carolina rivers would acquire tar on his heels — hence “tar heels.”

***tar kiln***

An old-timey kiln for making tar. Usually good rich pine butts or knots were used, being piled in a heap, with a trough underneath made of clay. Then the pile was covered with dirt, with an opening in the center for the smoke to come out. The timber was lighted and set for a slow sweaty burning. The tar oozed into the clay trough and flowed to a barrel or pot placed on a lower level.

***tarnal***

Eternal.

*tarnation!*

A mild expletive.

*beat the tar out of*

To thrash soundly.

*tartar*

A bad-tempered, fierce person, usually applied to a woman. "Lord, that Sally Ann Butts is a reg'lar tartar."

*task*

A set amount, a delimited job of work. "Now, boys, I've set you a task of two hundred pounds of cotton apiece before you can go off and play baseball," my father announced that morning. And of course Hugh and I were up at daybreak and into the west cotton fields picking away when the sun came up. The heavy dew made the cotton weigh more, and by twelve o'clock we were free and, after a bit of dinner, off with bounding feet and singing heart to the ballfield at the old Schofield place, Hugh to play left field and me to pitch.

*taste*

A tiny bit, a shade more. "Your house is a taste finer'n mine with that extra chimney."

*ta-ta*

A jocular half-mocking reply to a statement or announcement.

*'tater*

Potato. "Sister, give that child a 'tater and hush its squalling."

*tatterdemalion*

A ragged good-for-nothing person.

*tatters*

Rags. "Look at them pore Barnes young'uns — just going in tatters."

*tatting*

One of the needlework skills taught in the early female academies.

*tattle*

To gossip.

*tattletale*

A gossip, a scandalmonger.

*Tattletale-tit,*

Your tongue shall be split  
And every hog and dog

Shall have a little bit.  
(A teasing rhyme.)

*tattoo*

An indelible mark or pattern needle-worked into the skin, often repented of later to little avail.

Sailors and soldiers and young men going far from their sweethearts or favorite women would often have some love-token tattooed, usually on the forearm. The Indians in the Valley were addicted to tattooing also. Many men favor the seductive and naked female form for a pattern. Newell Everett who worked at our sawmill had two buxom female breasts tattooed on the inside of his powerful forearm. "When I get to feeling low," he said, "all I got to do to get my spirits coming is to roll up my sleeve and look at that pair of woman's titties."

*taw*

A large marble, usually of glass, used to shoot the smaller marbles or dinahs.

A sweetheart. An especially prized possession.

*come to taw*

To toe the mark, to measure up, also to suffer retribution.

*tea cake*

A round sweet thin cake popular in the Valley, named from the English habit of serving cake with tea.

*tear*

A spree, a wild party or cutting up. "George Sexton got drunk last night at the box-party and went on a tear — we had to conk him on the head with a piece of scantling to quiet him."

It's easier to *tear down* than to build up.

*tear down, tear off*

To flee, run. "He tore down the road like the dogs were after him."

*a tearing hurry*

A frenzied activity.

*tear-jerker*

A sentimental story or funeral service, a powerful preacher. "Old Sandy King is a tear-jerker all right — when he really gets going in the pulpit."

*a tease*

A joking, fun-loving person.

*teasel*

A low plant that likes to grow in the damp woods and along running streams.

The root is astringent, and the leaves were once used to heal up cuts and open wounds.

*techous*

Touchous.

*teddy*

A woman's chemise.

*teeny*

Tiny.

*teeny-einsy (teen-einy) (teeny-ouncy)*

Very tiny.

*teeter-totter*

A child's playground balancing board, a seesaw.

A person with a gap between his front *teeth* will be lucky.

One's *teeth* should be pulled when the zodiac blood sign is in the feet and not in the head — if the latter, one is likely to have a lot of bleeding.

*something to get one's teeth in*

A subject one can make headway in, something palpable, actual, real.

*to have one's wisdom teeth*

To have grown up to wisdom's maturity, to be knowing, hard to be fooled, and so on.

*teetotally*

Entirely, completely. "That gal has teetotally ruined him."

*telepathy*

A common superstition of long enduring to the effect that thought or knowledge can be transferred from one person to another without any physical means of communication. The parapsychology (a more scientific and passable name for extrasensory perception) laboratory at Duke University is engaged head over heels in this folk belief.

*tell*

To recognize, identify. "My car is red, so I can tell it easy in any parking lot."

To show, mark. "His age is beginning to tell on him."

Till.

*Tell* no tales out of school.

*tell off*

To scold, berate, bless out, bawl out. "I told that scutter off and I mean told."

*tell out*

To scold.

*tell-tale-tit*

See "Tattletale-tit."

*tell the news*

To weep loudly, to shout, cry out. "Every time Maudie Messer whups her boy you can hear him tell the news clean down here to our house."

*tempest in a teapot*

Much ado about little or nothing.

*temptious*

Tempting.

*Ten Commandments*

The most powerful of all aphorisms and folk proverbs in guiding the behavior of the Valley people.

The decalogue, a summary of God's, given to Moses on Mt. Sinai for man's obeying.

*"Ten Little Indians"*

One little, two little, three little Indians,  
 Four little, five little, six little Indians,  
 Seven little, eight little, nine little Indians,  
 Ten little Indian boys — and girls and papooses and  
      braves and squaws.     (The last is recited in a rush.)  
      (A child's nursery song.)

*on tenterhooks*

In an emotional state of uncertainty.

*"Tenting Tonight"*

The actual title is "We're Tenting Tonight," but we always said "Tenting Tonight." It, too, was one of our quartet favorites.

This is another heart-reaching song coming out of the tragic and wasteful Civil War. It was written by Walter Kittredge soon after he was drafted into the Union Army in 1862. It quickly became a favorite with both North and South. I used it in a Civil War play "Wilderness Road," and in an antiphonal scene both the boys in blue and the boys in gray sang it — one side in answer to the other and then both sides on the chorus together — separated by a protecting hillock.

"We're tenting tonight on the old campground,  
 Give us a song to cheer

Our weary hearts, a song of home  
And friends we loved so dear."

"Many are the hearts that are weary tonight,  
Wishing for the war to cease.  
Many are the hearts looking for the right  
To see the dawn of peace.

Chorus

"Tenting tonight, tenting tonight,  
Tenting on the old campground."

And so on, with the heart-hurting words,  
"Dying tonight,  
Dying on the old campground."

*terbacker*

Tobacco.

*termatoes*

Tomatoes.

*in terms of*

A popular cliché among political speakers and dull classroom teachers, meaning to appraise one thing by picturing another.

*tessie boy*

An effeminate fellow, a weak-willed errand boy.

*tessie man*

A volatile and knee-bending servant or sycophant, a handyman.

*testes*

Tests.

*tetch*

Touch.

*Tetherball*

A one-person, if necessary, ball game. A pole is set up some eight or ten feet high and a tethered ball, with some string footage a little less than the height of the pole, is attached to the top of the pole. The player or players with a racquet or even a hand can knock the ball wrappingly around the pole without letting it slacken. A tennis ball is often used.

*A tethered* sheep soon starves.

*talk like a Texan*

Said of one given to boastfulness about his accomplishments or possessions.

*Texas star*

A folk-dance figure. Also a well-known flower.

Old Mis' Caroline Turner grew the flower in her garden in memory of her brother who had migrated to Texas soon after the Civil War. She also wrote a little book of poetry by the same name and had it privately printed. Mr. Mac, the local historian, said he once had a copy of it but somebody borrowed it and never returned it. He said he didn't remember any of the poems by heart. "But they were good, Paul, plumb good," he said.

*Thalian Hall*

An early theatre in Wilmington, North Carolina. The Thalian Society, which built it, produced many Shakespeare and European plays, and until the end of the 19th century all parts were taken by males. From some of the newspaper reports over the years many of the males made ideal females. Also, according to some theatre historians, the Little Theatre in America had its beginnings here. The Hall is still in active theatre use.

*thang*

Thing. "You get that thang right out of my house."

*Thanks* is the poor man's money.

*thanky-ma'am (excuse-me-ma'am)*

A shallow ditch across a dirt road, or its opposite — a bullhead to turn the water — both giving a bump to a buggy when it passes over and usually accompanied by the laughing remark of the courting couple, "Thanky-ma'am." — at least in the old, old horse-and-buggy days.

*That gets me!*

Something which stumps, puzzles or irritates.

*that I know of*

A phrase still common in the Valley. "Has John been by today?"  
"Not that I know of."

*That's a huckleberry over my persimmon.*

One thing or statement that tops another. "Yeh, I'll hush up — what you say is a huckleberry over my persimmon."

*That's it.*

The conclusive fact, the accounting, enough said. "Seventeen dollars for the lot, and that's it."

*That (It) whips me.*

Defeats me, is beyond my solving.

the

A particularizing article, used especially in connection with sicknesses, as "He's got the itch" — or the headache, the neuralgia, the appendicitis, and so on.

*Theophilis Thistle*, the thistle sifter,  
Sifted a sack of thistles with the  
Thick of his thumb.  
A sack of thistles did Theophilis Thistle,  
the thistle sifter, sift.  
If Theophilis Thistle, the thistle sifter, sifted  
a sack of thistles with the thick of his thumb,  
Where is the sack of thistles that Theophilis  
Thistle sifted? (A tongue twister.)

***"There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood"***

One of the most vivid and powerful of all fundamentalist church hymns. The words were written by that tormented poet, William Cowper, about 1770 and the tune we sang was composed by Lowell Mason (1792-1872) many years later. Mason was one of America's most prolific as well as most beloved composers.

Francis Arthur Jones in his *Famous Hymns and Their Authors* gives a stirring and piteous picture of Cowper's mental sufferings about the time he wrote the hymn. It was suggested by a text taken from Zechariah 13, verse 1, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

It was one of the first hymns Cowper wrote after his first attack of temporary madness. He was naturally of a nervous and shy temperament and this extreme sensitivity added to his malady or at least made him more open to its maraudings. It seems he had been promised a post as Clerk of the Journal of the House of Lords and was rejoiced to contemplate his coming appointment and more freedom from the confines of poverty. But to his horror he learned he must undergo a public examination before the House before he could receive the appointment. Jones quotes an account of the matter given in the "North American Review" for January 1834:

"As the time drew nigh, his agony became more and more intense; he hoped and believed that madness would come to relieve him; he attempted also to make up his mind to commit suicide, though his conscience bore stern testimony against it; he could not by any argument persuade himself that it was right, but this desperation prevailed, and he procured from an apothecary the means of self-destruction. On the day before his public appearance was to be made, he happened to notice a letter in the newspaper, which to his disordered mind seemed like a malignant libel on himself. He



immediately threw down the paper and rushed into the fields, determined to die in a ditch, but the thought struck him that he might escape from the country. With the same violence he proceeded to make hasty preparations for his flight; but while he was engaged in packing his portmanteau his mind changed, and he threw himself into a coach, ordering the man to drive to the Tower wharf, intending to throw himself into the river, and not reflecting that it would be impossible to accomplish his purpose in that public spot. On approaching the water, he found a porter seated upon some goods: he then returned to the coach and was conveyed to his lodgings at the Temple. On the way he attempted to drink the laudanum, but as often as he raised it, a convulsive agitation of his frame prevented its reaching his lips; and thus, regretting the loss of the opportunity, but unable to avail himself of it, he arrived, half dead with anguish, at his apartment. He then shut the doors and threw himself upon the bed with the laudanum near him, trying to lash himself up to the deed; but a voice within seemed constantly to forbid it, and as often as he extended his hand to the poison, his fingers were contracted and held back by spasms.

“At this time some of the inmates of the place came in, but he concealed his agitation, and as soon as he was left alone, a change came over him, and so detestable did the deed appear, that he threw away the laudanum and dashed the vial to pieces. The rest of the day was spent in heavy insensibility, and at night he slept as usual; but on waking at three in the morning, he took his penknife and lay with his weight upon it, the point towards his heart. It was broken and would not penetrate. At daybreak he arose, and passing a strong garter round his neck, fastened it to the frame of his bed: this gave way with his weight, but on securing it to the door, he was more successful, and remained suspended till he had lost all consciousness of existence. After a time the garter broke and he fell to the floor, so that his life was saved; but the conflict had been greater than his reason could endure. He felt for himself a contempt not to be expressed or imagined; whenever he went into the street, it seemed as if every eye flashed upon him with indignation and scorn; he felt as if he had offended God so deeply that his guilt could never be forgiven, and his whole heart was filled with tumultuous pangs of despair. Madness was not far off, or rather madness was already come.”

“There is a fountain filled with blood  
    Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
    Lose all their guilty stains,  
    Lose all their guilty stains,  
    Lose all their guilty stains—  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,

Lose all their guilty stains.

“The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day  
And there may I though vile as he  
Wash all my sins away,  
Wash all my sins away, etc.

“E’en since by faith I saw the stream  
My flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme  
And shall be till I die,  
And shall be till I die, etc.

“When this poor lisping stammering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave,  
There is a nobler sweeter song  
I’ll sing, thy power to save,  
I’ll sing, thy power to save.”

*There was an old woman*  
Lived under a hill  
And if she’s not gone  
She’s a-living there still.  
(A nursery rhyme.)

*They* that are bound must obey.

*They* who cannot as *they* would must do as *they* can.

*They* who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

*thick and thin*

Every kind of circumstance, good and bad.

as *thick* as fleas

as *thick* as flies

as *thick* as glue

as *thick* as hops

as *thick* as molasses

as *thick* as mush

as *thick* as peas

as *thick* as pea soup

as *thick* as the hairs on a dog's back

as *thick* as thieves

*thicket*

A woman's pudenda.

*thickhead*

A stupid person.

*thick neck*

A bully.

*thick of hearing*

Somewhat deaf.

It takes a *thief* to catch a *thief*.

*thimble*

The steel sheath covering the wooden end of a wagon axle around which the hub of the wheel revolves.

Also a popular young folks' game sometimes known as "Weave the Thimble" or "Who's Got the Thimble?" Each player except "It" sits with the palms of his hands together and extended. "It" goes around with a thimble or coin hidden in his own clasped hands and slides his hands between the hands of the other players in succession, one of them being the secret recipient of the coin or thimble. As "It" does this, he keeps up a chant, "Weave, weave the thimble." When he reaches the end of the line of players he asks the first player, "Thimble, thimble, who's got the thimble?" The first player makes his guess and so on. Then "It" says "Rise up, thimble, show yourself." Whoever has guessed correctly becomes "It" and the game proceeds.

*thimbleberry*

The black raspberry.

as *thin* as a lath

as *thin* as a rail

as *thin* as a rake

as *thin* as paper

*thingamajigger*

An item of indefinite reference. "Hand me that thingamajigger over there, please."

*the thing of it is*

An introductory phrase to emphasize a following statement. "The thing of it is she ought to pay her debts, then the people would respect her more and take more stock in her preaching."

*things*

Cattle, stock, also pigs. "You boys feed the things while I'm gone to Dunn."

Clothes. "Wait till I pack my things and I'll be with you."

*Think* today and speak tomorrow.

As you *think* of others, others *think* of you.

As a man *thinketh* in his soul so is he.

*think hard of*

To have animosity toward.

*to my thinking*

In my opinion.

*thinking cap*

State of concentration. "I'll put on my thinking cap and see if I can remember her maiden name."

*think of*

To recollect, to remember. "I intended to go to the homecoming at old Bethesda, but I didn't think of it."

*Think of it!*

A mild interjection.

*thin-skinned*

Sensitive, easy to anger.

*third degree*

A stern ordeal, a fierce probing, a beating. "We gave that fellow the third degree and he owned right up."

*Thirst* is sure the end of drinking, and sorrow is the end of loving.

*thirteen*

A bad luck number. Some hotels don't have a thirteenth floor or a room with the number thirteen. "Okay so far," said the man as he fell by the thirteenth floor.

*Thirteen* people at a table means bad luck for the youngest one — maybe early death.

*Thirty* days hath September,  
 April, June and November.  
 All the rest have thirty-one,  
 Save February alone  
 And that has twenty-eight days clear  
 And twenty-nine in each leap year.  
 (A learning rhyme.)

*this here*

Something close by, as opposed to "that there."

*This is the life.*

A comfy living, a hunky-dory situation.

*thistle*

This is a coarse biennial from two to three feet high. There are some seven species in the Valley. When the root is boiled in milk it is supposed to be good for the dysentery.

*thorn apple*

See "Jimson weed."

*thorn in one's side (flesh)*

A bothersome or irritating person or thing.

*thorny*

Difficult, touchy, hard to handle. "Teaching sex in the public schools is a thorny subject."

*thoughted*

Thought. "He thoughted the matter over and decided 'no.' "

*'thouten*

Without.

*th'owed*

Threw. "They say George Washington once th'owed a silver dollar slap across the Potomac River."

*thrash*

An eruptive breaking out especially afflicting children in the mouth. Also a disease afflicting the inner hock of a horse's hoof. There are many hocus-pocus cures for children's or babies' thrash. One that the old colored man Uncle Benjamin Dunn practiced was to breathe into the child's mouth, mutter some barbaric syllables, then go to the woods and break out the top of a little pine tree. He would then row out into the millpond with his boat to where the water was shallow enough and plant the piece of tree there.

As it gradually died the thrash would disappear. Uncle Benjamin also could blow fire out of burns. He would stand over the person who had been burnt and make all kinds of queer passes in the air and over the burn with his hands, mumbling to himself and puffing away. Then when he had finished he would straighten up and cry out, "Clear my paf, folkses, here I come!" And he would dash out of the house, run down the hill and jump into the pond or creek. There he would huff and puff and wallow around like a great hog or circus animal. "Since I tuk the fire into myself," he would say, "this here's the best means I know of how to squench it."

Uncle Benjy also had other powers. One night he heard a ruckus down in his hen house. He hurried there and saw a Negro man. "Throw up your hands!" he shouted from the darkness. The thief, thinking someone had a gun drawn on him, threw up his hands. Uncle Benjy walked up to him, looked at him, and said, "You stand there, and you can't take them hands down now nuther, for they's paralyzed." And the Negro couldn't. All night long he stood there frozen in his tracks, his hands held up. The next morning at sunrise Uncle Benjy went down and told him he could let his hands drop now. And the Negro did, and they said he raised a cloud of dust going away from there.

The *thread* follows the needle.

### *Thread the Needle*

A children's game. It is played much like London Bridge. Two children become the leaders. Facing each other, they clasp hands and raise them in the air. The other children in a line pass under the hands. When the hands are suddenly lowered, two children are caught, and they must pay a forfeit — sometimes, if they are a boy and girl, they have to kiss. A song most often accompanies the action—

"The needle's eye it does supply  
The thread that runs so true (plumb through),  
O many a one we let pass on  
Because we wanted you.

"There's (They's) none so sweet or dressed so neat.  
It's out and in we do intend  
To make this couple meet  
And kiss with kisses sweet."

### *old man three-balls*

A pawnbroker.

*Three* blind mice, three blind mice,  
See how they run, see how they run.  
They all ran after the farmer's wife.

She cut off their tails with a carving knife.  
Did you ever see such a sight in your life  
As three blind mice.

(A nursery rhyme used as a round.)

*three on a light*

It's bad luck for three people to light their cigarettes from a single match.

*Three* removes are as bad as a fire.

Things always come in *threes*.

*Three's* company, four's a crowd.

*three sheets in the wind*

Drunk, tipsy.

*Three things* that quickly fade are an echo, a rainbow and a woman's beauty.

*thribble*

Triple.

*thribs*

Three in the game of marbles. If a player happens to knock three dinahs out of the ring when he shoots his taw and cries out ahead of anybody else "Thribs!" he may keep the three. But if another player in the game calls out "Venture thribs!" ahead of him, he is allowed only one.

*thriller-diller*

A spectacular thing.

*throat-cutter*

An unscrupulous trader or sharp-dealing business man. "I agree with Barry Newton," said Mr. Botking the other day, "Asa Sinclair is the slickest throat-cutter in the political game today."

*belly thinks the throat is cut*

A condition of great hunger.

*throat latch*

A narrow leather bridle strap which passes under the throat of a horse or mule to prevent the animal from rubbing the bridle off against a tree or hitching post, or even getting it off with one of its forefeet.

*the throne*

The john, the commode in a bathroom or privy.

*through and through*

Completely.

*through the mill*

Suffered hard times, difficulty. "That fellow's been through the mill all right."

*throw*

To confuse. "His question really threw me for awhile."

To win in wrestling. "I ain't afraid of him, I can throw him every time we wrestle, even if he is twict my size."

*throw cold water on*

To discourage, to dampen one's enthusiasm.

*throw dust in one's eyes*

To deceive, fool, confuse.

*throw for a loop*

To outdo completely, to cause one to come a cropper.

*throw in*

To go into partnership with. "If you'll throw in with me, I believe we can clean up in the drug business."

To make an addition, to add extra, to give boot. "I'll swap my horse for yours if you'll throw in the buggy."

*Throwing Tobacco Tags*

A popular game among boys in the old days, a sort of crackaloo. The bright colored tin tags from plugs of chewing tobacco were especially sought for — Apple, Plum, Brown Mule, Peach or whatnot. A mark would be drawn and the players would see who could pitch their tags close to the mark. Often several tags were beaten together to add weight and accuracy to the throw. The one whose tag was nearest the mark after the throw collected the losing tags.

*throw in the sponge (the towel)*

To yield, to give up.

*Throw Knives*

Much the same game as Throwing Tobacco Tags.

*throw lead*

To shoot rapidly and wildly.

*throw off on*

To criticize unduly, to berate.

*throw one's weight around*

To act big, to make obvious use of one's influence.



***throw over***

To jilt, same as kick.

***throw the book at***

To react strongly at someone, penalize heavily.

***throw up***

To vomit.

***thumb***

To fire, dismiss. "I got the thumb, and I'm out."

***thumb paper***

A piece of paper or cardboard held under the thumb by a student to keep the open page of his book from getting dirty or wearing out too soon.

***all thumbs***

An awkward or heavy-fingered person.

***stick out like a sore thumb***

To be obvious, especially as in a flaw or error.

***thumb one's nose at***

To deride, scorn.

***under one's thumb***

To have control of.

***thumping***

Large, a great deal. "Last night I took a thumping dose of calomel and you can imagine how I feel today — just to look at the garden house sets me to running towards it."

***Thunder*** in hot weather will make eggs spoil so they won't hatch and also will turn milk sour as well as stop fish from biting.

***By thunder!***

An exclamation.

The first ***thunder*** in the spring wakes up the snakes.

***Thunderation!***

An interjection.

***thunder ball***

A meteor.

***thunderclap***

A burst of thunder, a sudden and astounding happening or piece of news.

*thunderhead*

A small black wad of cloud usually rising in the southwest on hot afternoons in summer, presaging the formation of a larger cloud and rain to follow, accompanied by thunder and lightning.

*thunder mug*

The chamber pot.

*play thunder*

To make a mess of things. "Now you've just played thunder by getting engaged to that Sadie Cofield — why she's slept with every man in Summerville." "Now, Lem, don't git upset — after all, Summerville ain't such a big place."

*thunder roots*

Sweet potatoes.

When it *thunders*, the fish won't bite.

*thunderstone*

Thunderbolt, perhaps a piece of fused sand, glass-like where lightning has struck the earth.

In the old days a thunderstone was the best possible protection against lightning, so 'twas said. These stones, according to popular belief, were discharged at the earth from every flash of vertical lightning. They were supposed to be glassy-looking and about the size of a good madstone — a couple of inches long and about an inch wide. Old Duncan McPhail, the Negro horse doctor, had one of these magic stones which he said he found in a sand bed. He kept it in a trunk in his house and in the wildest electric storms had no fear that his dwelling would ever be struck by lightning. And often if he had to be outdoors in the fields or off doctoring a cow or sick mule and thunderstorms were about, he carried the thunderstone in his pocket. And though everybody else might rush indoors during the fierce cannonading in the skies, old Duncan would go on quietly and serenely about his work.

I got to know Duncan well when I was a boy and used to love to hear him talk. "I was a bad nigger in my younger days," he once said to me.

"Aw go 'way, Uncle Duncan," I said, "you never were bad."

"Oh, yessuh I was," he replied stoutly and with a little show of pride.

"Bad, mighty much bad. But I won't go into that, for it's all done past. And I'm thankful I got over my wildness. It was the stars falling that changed me."

"The stars?"

"Yessuh."

"Aw now."

“ ’Twas. It was the heavenly firmament breaking to pieces and pieces of it falling down. The stars fell.”

“You mean the stars really fell?”

“And that’s ezzactly what I do mean. The stars sho’ did fall. I witnessed ’em with my own two eyes. One night close after the surrenduh, I waked up to reach for my friendly liquor jug I kept close by the bed and I heard a great commotion going all up and down the big road where the folks were squealing and shouting. And looking out through the window I seen a bluish white light. I first thought it was Judgment Day had come. And yessuh, I lost no time in finding myself out in the yard. And whee-ooh, it was plumb raining stars. They hit on the ground in front of the house like millions of little glass bubbles, and they was bounding up like trab-balls higher’n my head, for you mought know at that izzact minute I was down on my knees wrassling up a great prayer to the most high God. Yessuh, that was a night! And it changed my ways. I promised God then if he’d not destroy the world and let me live till daybreak, I’d never take another drink of liquor and would behave myself and try to do good on earth. He kept his promise. Well, suh, one hot summer day soon after that I was walking ’long the road and my feet just seemed bound to the crossroads where Jeems Turner sold liquor, when bam! out’n the clear sky come a bolt of lightning and it struck right in front of my feet. When the smoke cleared off, there lay that thunderstone, so hot you couldn’t handle it. When it cooled off, I put it in my pocket. Yessuh, it’s got the power and I ain’t afraid of nothing that comes out of the sky no more. I got the insterment of perpection.”

### *thyme*

A favorite garden herb.

### *on tick*

On credit, charged to one’s account (ticket).

### *ticker*

The heart. “He went to the doctor last week and they told him his ticker was in bad shape.”

### *ticket*

Belief, credo. “Man as a responsible agent is my ticket.”

### *meal ticket*

A support, the breadwinner of the family.

### *ticking*

A coarse cloth especially used to cover pillows and feather bedding.

A *ticking* sound in the wall foretells death.

*Tickle, Tickle*

A tickling rhyme. There are a number of these rhymes we children used to gleefully recite with the appropriate finger digging and tickling. The soles of the feet or underneath the arm was the most ticklish place we found.

Old maid, an old maid,  
You are sure to be  
If you laugh or smile  
When I *tickle* your knee.

*tickled pink*

Very much pleased, gratified.

*tickled to death*

A common exaggeration. "Lonnie Matthews just about tickles me to death."

*to tickle one's ears*

To flatter.

*tickler*

A bottle, especially a liquor bottle. "Mr. Will drank a whole tickler of whiskey coming from Dunn, and no wonder he was shouting when he got home."

*tickle tail*

A gossamer-like weed. We children used to gather these tickle tails in handfuls where they had wind-drifted into fence jambs and tickle our noses to make ourselves sneeze.

*tickle the ivories*

To play the piano.

*Tickling* a baby will cause it to stammer when it grows older, also cause it to steal.

*tickly*

Easily tickled, easy to make laugh.

*ticks*

A body curse of numerous kinds — dog ticks, cow ticks, bed ticks, seed ticks, and so on.

*tickweed (smooth tickseed)*

A lovely little sunflower which gladdens the roadsides in summer. Its leaves help as an expectorant.

*Tiddly-Winks*

A game we called Tiddly-Winks was played with long knitting-needle-like sticks. The sticks are gathered in the hand, then dropped on the rug or floor

in a loose pile or scattered disarray. The player must pick each one up carefully without moving in the slightest any other stick. If he fails, then the other player gathers up the sticks and has his turn. See "Straws."

*tidy*

A covering, sometimes ornamental, to protect the back or arms of a chair or sofa from becoming soiled.

*tied up*

To be busy, engaged. "Sorry I'm tied up on that date or I'd be glad to come and speak for the bond issue."

*tie the knot*

Get married.

*tiff*

A quarrel, a falling out.

*tiger lily*

Sometimes called the crumple lily. It has perennial bulbs and is a favorite garden flower. It originally came from China, they say, and the Chinese used the bulbs for food.

*tight*

Constipated. "That doctor gave me some pills, and now I'm all tight."

Drunk. "He come to the party tight as a tick."

as *tight* as a banjo

as *tight* as a drum

as *tight* (thrifty) as a Scotchman

as *tight* as a tick

as *tight* as Dick's hatband

as *tight* as hickory bark

as *tight* as the bark on a tree

as *tight* as the skin

*in a tight*

In a tough situation.

*a tight doing woman*

A woman with a lot of know-how in sexual intercourse.

*to tighten one's belt*

To make a new resolve, to summon extra willpower for a hard job ahead,

to curtail one's expenses, and so on.

*tight-fisted*

Stingy.

*the tight-skinned man*

"Ever hear about the tight-skinned man?"

"No."

"Wanter hear about him?"

"Yeh."

"Well, his skin was so tight on his body that every time he winked his eye he skinned his prick."

"Uh!"

"Wanter hear about the loose-skinned man?"

"No! Good-by!"

(A sell or catch, a bit of stringing.)

*tight squeeze*

A precarious situation, a difficult way forward.

*tightwad*

A skinflint. "Mr. John Allen is a tightwad all right. He'll take your fifty-dollar note for thirty days at six percent and you get forty."

*till hell freezes (over)*

A very long time indeed, forever.

*till the cows come home*

A long, long time. "That woman will cheat him till the cows come home."

*time*

Wages, salary.

A term of imprisonment.

Difficulty, trouble. "Boy, did I have a time finding you!"

*Time* and tide wait for no man.

*Time* heals all.

*Time* heals all wounds.

*Time* wounds all heels.

Take *time* by the forelock.

Lost *time* is never found.

I've got more *time* than money.

*time being*

For the moment, at the present. "All is quiet out there for the time being."

*time book*

The charge book usually kept by the local village merchant or landlord in which were entered the supplies furnished on time to the tenant farmer till his crop was sold in the fall.

*time crank*

One who is over-particular about his watch or clock keeping correct time. My brother Will Green was a watch-repair man, and he said he had a lot of trouble with time cranks. "It's a disease all watchmakers dread," he said, "and it ain't restricted to any geographical location. It occurs wherever people and timepieces occur, and his Honor Remus Brown, the Mayor of Linneyville, was one of the worst afflicted I ever met up with. He was always taking out his watch, looking at it, thinking about the time, asking a friend what time of day it was, telling how much his watch was losing, how much it was gaining — and the like.

"Soon after Remus discovered he had a gravel pit on his land just west of the town, he had me order him a fine Hamilton watch. It cost \$150. I adjusted it as best I could. But in a day or two his honor was back to have it checked. It had lost a minute or more, he said, according to the radio. So I fixed it," Will said, "but next week he was back again. It had gained a minute. I explained to him there was no such thing as a perfect watch or clock and never would be. The stars themselves, I told him, don't keep perfect time. At least according to the almanac they don't. You have to add or subtract or figure it out by a table to make even the magnetic north right. But he was determined, Remus was. I could tell from the look in his eye that the disease had him. So he traded in the \$150 Hamilton and got a \$200 one. Of course that didn't do any better. So he had to have a \$300 watch. I ordered that for him. His gravel pit was doing well, you see, and the steam shovels were digging up the whole side of the hill there where you enter the town. 'Making a great mess of things,' said Miss Almira Jenkins, President of the Garden Club. But I don't know about that, it depends maybe on how you look at it.

"Anyhow, about this time Remus' wife fell sick with a bad inside trouble. Some said she should have had an operation — I don't know. Others said Remus was too stingy to send her off where the specialists could take care of her. My own thinking is he had spent so much on watches that he was short of cash. Like me, Remus was never one to go and hold his hat and sweat standing in front of old Cousin Atlas McCoy in the bank to borrow money. Well, his wife died. And soon after that Remus was in to see me worrying about his watch again and wanting me to get him a \$400 one. So

I did—about the best money could buy. I delivered that watch to him and expected him back in a few days, being caught in the spell of his disease the way he was, to have me adjust it for him. But he didn't show up. Nor did he come back for some time. Then I heard he was out courting again, sparking Sadie Roberts across the river whose father Ed Roberts owned a world of land. Remus came into the shop several times during his courtship and not once did he ever mention the fact that his watch was slow. In fact one of the first things he did was trade in his expensive watch for his original \$150 one which I still had on hand. And he put the money into earrings, a jeweled comb and a ring for Sadie. And thereafter when he came in he would always make his way straight to the jewelry counter case.

“Soon after he had bought the diamond ring for Sadie, the two were married and I saw nothing much more of Remus for several months.

“Then one day as I was working away at my little table in the window, a voice beyond the counter said, ‘Hey, Will, I want you to take a look at this here watch.’ I glanced up and there was Remus. He had the same old look and his voice had the same old sound. ‘It lost several minutes last week,’ he said.

“I saw that the time disease had him again. No, I don't know just how he and Sadie are getting along. But from his frequent visits here to have his watch checked up I would not think too well. In fact, I've heard they're thinking of divorce. Only yesterday, he told me he had to get rid of his old watch and wanted me to buy him a \$200 one. Yes, once a time crank, always a time crank, we watchmakers say. Love may interrupt it for awhile, but only for awhile.”

*time of day*

To have slight acquaintance with. “Well, we pass the time of day — that's all.”

*time or two*

Rarely, once or twice in a long while, an indefinite number of times.

*timersome*

Timid, timorous.

as *timid* as a mouse

*tinhorn*

A cheap person, a loud mouth.

*tinker*

To trifle, to work at a matter or job half-heartedly. “Oh, he's in there just a-tinkering, go ahead and call him.”



*tinker's damn*

Of little worth, a trifle, an insignificant thing or person. "He ain't worth a tinker's damn, if you ask me."

*tin lizzie*

The early Ford car.

*tintsy-wintsy*

Very tiny. Same as teeny-einy.

*tintype*

A word used for emphasis. "You can bet your tintype I'll not join them Ku Klux."

*tip*

A gratuity, usually in money, also hint or important bit of information.

To lean. "Tip that scantling a shade this way and you'll have it."

*tip off*

To give a guiding hint, to let out confidential information.

*tipping*

Tiptoeing. "He come tipping into my room about daybreak and I yelled bloody murder at him."

*tipsy*

Under the influence of liquor, somewhat drunk.

*tip the hat*

The old polite custom of a man's tipping his hat (lifting it slightly from his head) to a lady when meeting or passing her. This has disappeared along with men's hats. But while it lasted I never remember seeing a white man tip his hat to a colored woman. I tried it somewhat furtively now and then as a young man.

*tip-top*

In fine fettle or health. "I'm feeling tip-top, Mr. Paul, since I had my operation for gallstones."

*as tired as a dog**tired to death*

Extremely tired, bored. "When Mr. Lee talks, I get tired (tared) to death."

*The Titanic*

The great "unsinkable" Royal Mail Steamship, a White Star liner, that struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic on its maiden voyage from Southampton to New York and some two hours later sank in the depths of the dark cold

Atlantic. This occurred near midnight on April 14, 1912. The luxury ship carried 2,224 passengers and crew, and 1,513 went down with the ship.

I can still remember with what horror we read the great black headlines of the morning *News and Observer*. For days the gloom of tragedy was felt throughout the Valley as elsewhere in the world. It was natural, of course — human nature being what it is, whatever that is — for the good Valley church people to believe that somehow the hand of God who rules all things had a part in the happening. Soon it was talked around as to how the rich people on the ship were carousing and committing sin and that was why the Almighty decided to destroy it. No point was made of bad seamanship and the captain's effort to set a new crossing record, these being the reason for his driving his ship on at a speed of more than forty knots an hour, although he had been warned by radio from other ships in the vicinity that icebergs were about.

And how our hearts ached over this awful tragedy! And the item that brought us all down to tears was to read in the paper that the ship's orchestra struck up "Nearer, My God, to Thee" and continued playing it until the engulfing waters poured drowningly over them.

Only a few weeks passed and I heard old Uncle Jerry McLean and others of our black neighbors singing a Titanic song as they chopped grass from the spring cotton. Where they got the song, I don't know. Maybe it sprang out of their own sympathizing lamenting.

"Won't (wasn't, weren't) it sad about the Titanic  
How she went down!  
Won't it sad about the Titanic  
How she went down?"

"It was on a Monday morning,  
Just about one o'clock  
When the mighty ship Titanic  
She began to reel and rock!"

"Won't it sad about the Titanic  
How she went down!"

"Husbands parted from their wives,  
Women and children lost their lives.  
Won't it sad about the Titanic  
How she went down!"

*tits*

Breasts, sometimes refers to nipples only.

*Tit-tat-toe*

A game.

*titty*

A woman's breast. Also the old Scotch word used in the Valley long ago for sister.

*titty-binder*

A corset, a bra.

*a tizzy*

A tantrum, confusion.

*to*

Till. "He kept on drinking to he died."

*toad-flax*

A common Valley wild flower but uncommon in that some species are annual and biennial as well as perennial. One species bears showy yellow flowers, grows from one to three feet tall, and is a good spectacle along ditches and in muddy places in spring and early summer. A tincture was sometimes used for jaundice and externally for hemorrhoids. Another species is called blue toad-flax as contrasted with yellow toad-flax and often turns old fields blue with its azure beauty. It is poisonous to cattle.

*toad-frog*

Toad. The blood or urine of a toad-frog will cause warts if it touches one's skin.

*toady to*

To kowtow to, to be obsequious to. "He toadies to anyone who's got money or position — that's how he's got where he has."

*toady up to*

To flatter, to make up to.

*toast*

To warm, make hot. "Let me toast my feet at the fire a minute — they're frozen."

*tobacco*

Chewing-tobacco juice used to be a good cure for all sorts of ailments, especially of the skin, such as ringworms, pimples, boils, and eruptions. Also it is good for wasp and bee stings.

My father would always take some of his chewed tobacco and put on our hurts when we were little children. Later he quit chewing tobacco and we had to look elsewhere for help for our pains. To the Indians as well as the early settlers tobacco was a medicinal herb. It was a good nerve and body tonic. Also tobacco ashes mixed with gin were good for dropsy in both children and grownups. It was generally believed in the Valley that tobacco

and snuff were good for the teeth and gums and helped prevent toothache. All the advertisements of the dentists haven't yet been able to entirely destroy that belief. Another belief in the Valley about tobacco was that if a person was bit by a poisonous snake and another wished to suck the poison out, he must first chew some tobacco and then the poison wouldn't hurt him. Poultices made of wet cured tobacco leaves are good for all kinds of insect bites.

*tobacco beds*

Seed beds usually made ready in January and February in the Valley. Tobacco seeds are raked in and the bed covered with tobacco cloth. The plants are ready for transplanting to field rows in late March and on up to the middle of April.

*tobacco curing*

The process of preparing the ripened tobacco for market.

In the lower part of the Valley tobacco begins ripening in June and continues on through the upper reaches of the Valley into August. The leaves ripen from the bottom of the plant and gradually on to the top. These leaves are stripped off (or primed) as they ripen and carried to the tobacco barns where they are tied in "hands" of approximately five leaves on the tobacco sticks and hung around the entire interior of the windowless barn. When the barn is filled, fires are started in the furnaces (oil is used now instead of wood) and the buildings closed tight. The first process is to set the desired color (yellow). Then the temperature in the barn is gradually raised to, say, 180 degrees in order to kill out (dry out) the stems in the leaves. It takes a little over three days usually to cure out a barn. Gradually over the years tobacco has replaced cotton in the Valley and most of North Carolina as a main money crop.

*tobacco patch*

A tobacco field. The word patch is used even when it is a huge field.

*tobacco poultice*

Cured tobacco leaves dampened and bound against a wound, especially rusty nail hurts, was a good remedy.

*tobacco tags*

The ornamental tin or metal tags which marked the different brands of chewing tobacco. See "Throwing Tobacco Tags."

One *today* is worth two tomorrows.

*to-do*

A fuss, confusion, showy behavior.

*toe itch*

See "ground itch."

*toes up*

Dead. "There lay old Joe with his toes up — and no more running after women."

*toe the line*

Same as toe the mark, be on one's good behavior.

*tolerable*

In average health. A usual neighborly reply to an inquiry such as "How're you feeling, Tom?" — "Just tolerable." Also meant bearable.

*toll*

A portion of grain or corn kept out by the miller as a charge for grinding the rest. Also a charge at a tollgate, a tax or dues.

To entice, to lure. "She tolled him in her parlor and cooled him with her fan."

*to tomahawk*

To kill off. "They tomahawked my proposal on the first vote and that was that."

*tomato*

The common garden vegetable. In the old days they were called love apples and were thought to be poisonous. My Grandmother Green grew them for a decorative plant, never dreaming of eating them.

A green *tomato* sliced and rubbed on poison ivy infection will work a good cure.

*tomboy*

A girl of boyish actions and habits. "She'll never get a husband till she quits being such a tomboy."

*tomcat*

A rounder, a sexually motivated male.

*tomcatting about*

To prowl about in search of sexual adventure.

*Tom, Dick and Harry*

The common run of people, used derogatively. The mass, the crowd, the raggle-taggle people. "No wonder folks don't trust you for mayor — you run around with every Tom, Dick and Harry there is."

Little *Tommy Tucker*

Sings for his supper,  
What shall he eat?

Cornbread and butter.  
How will he cut it  
Without airy a knife?  
How will he be married  
Without airy a wife?  
(Nursery rhyme.)

*tom thumbs*

Sausage packed in large intestines.

*tomtit*

A popular bird nominated as the state bird, vying with the cardinal in many people's affections.

*Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son*  
Stole a pig and away he run.  
The pig was eat and Tom was beat,  
And Tom ran crying down the street.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

This popular nursery rhyme is a mutilation of an earlier old Scotch nursery rhyme which ran as follows—

Tom, Tom, the baker's son  
Stole a pig and away he run.  
The pig was eat and Tom was beat  
And Tom ran crying down the street.

According to an old folk tale I ran into in Edinburgh a few years ago, a pig was an ancient bun or cake sold by the Scotch bakers. So it actually was a bun that Tom stole and not the usually small, squealing shoat shown in Tom's embrace as he ran. Somehow in the passage of years and the repetition of the nursery piece, the original meaning of "pig" was lost, also "baker" was changed to "piper" according to choice.

*tom walkers*

Stilts.

We children never saw store-bought stilts. We made our own. We'd cut dogwood saplings about five or six feet long, trim them, leaving a six- or eight-inch piece of limb protruding from the sapling some foot or more from the ground. These would serve for us to stand on. With the ends of the saplings tucked under our arms and our feet planted on these binding, cut-off limb extensions, we'd stalk about. And what rough wear and tear on our poor shoes! We couldn't use our tom walkers barefooted. They hurt too much.

The *tongue* of idle persons is never idle.

*Tongue-biting* is a sign that one has been telling lies.

*the tongues*

The Pentecostal frenzy when the religiously aroused and demonic people would begin jabbering in a splurge of wild vocables. I remember hearing one man say that when "the tongues came on" him, he could speak "real chinee."

*tongue-tied*

Too shy or embarrassed to speak. "When I finally met that pretty girl I had admired from afar, dern, I was tongue-tied."

*tony*

High class, proud. "They are tony people in that big house."

*tooby sure* (to be sure)

Surely, certainly, (purely introductory at times). "Tooby sure we ain't gone and got ourselves lost."

*toofies*

A term for children's teeth. "Open your mouth, son, do them toofies hurt?"

*tool*

The penis.

*tool-bag*

The scrotum.

*Too many cooks* spoil the broth.

*toot*

To brag. "Hear him toot since he won a cattle prize at the fair."

A spree, shindig, a fearsome drunk. "I heard you were out on a toot last week, and no wonder you look like death itself."

Each child costs a woman a *tooth*.

After a *tooth* pulling, if one does not put his tongue where the *tooth* was, a gold *tooth* will grow in that place.

When a *tooth* is put under the pillow, the fairy will come and leave money.

The Negroes believed that if you carried a *tooth* taken from a human skull you would never have fits.

*toothache*

There are many folk remedies for the toothache. Old man Cheshire Jones, a near neighbor of ours, used to have the worst kind of toothache. One day in the dead of winter he went to the Negro conjure man down the road to

be cured. The "doctor" took him to the creek nearby, made him take off his shoes, roll up his pants legs, and stand in the icy water up to his knees, while he, the doctor, went up and down the bank breaking off twigs of every kind of bush and carrying on a mumbling rigamarole to himself. "Now your toothache's gone. Now your toothache's gone," he kept saying.

"But it ain't," said old Cheshire. "You good-for-nothing fool, it's worse than ever." He was half-frozen by this time and hopping up and down in the water.

"Well," said the conjure man. "Then it ain't the toothache, it must be the neuralgie, and I never said I could cure the neuralgie."

Well, Cheshire was so mad he tore out of the creek after the conjure doctor and ran him down the road. He stumbled over a rock, fell, and knocked out the aching tooth. Later on the conjure doctor went by to collect his fifty cents. "What in the tarnation for?" asked old Cheshire.

"For curing your toothache, suh," said the conjure man. "I has all kinds of ways."

And Cheshire started chasing him again.

Another good remedy for the toothache was to keep on hand a supply of toothpicks made from a tree that had been struck by lightning. There was supposed to be a vast healing power in a lightning-struck tree. The roots of such a tree were good also for all kinds of healing teas and tonics. An exception was the sweet gum tree for, as everybody knew, it was too tough for the influence of lightning to penetrate.

*A toothache* in a child can be cured by washing behind his ears.

### *toothache tree*

This tree is known by a number of names such as "the devil's walking stick," "prickly ash," "Hercules' club," "spikenard tree," "the pigeon tree," and "the shot bush."

A couple of years ago poking around the woods of my great-great grandfather's old plantation place, I found a grove of these gnarled and awkward trees. I dug up two or three small ones and took them to Chapel Hill and planted them in our wild flower garden and there they are flourishing well. I think of old Colonel Alexander McAllister every time I see them. The fresh bark of this tree is an emetic and cathartic and is also reputed to be an antidote for the bite of the rattlesnake. Other recommendations for it say it is good for cholera, rheumatism, syphilis and of course toothache as well as the dropsy. The oil of the seed of this tree has been used in earache and deafness and for all sorts of rheumatic pains.

### *toothache wax*

Another toothache cure. One broke off a piece of wax, which could be ordered in the old days from Sears-Roebuck, and pressed it into the decayed



part of the tooth to "bring instant relief."

***tooth and nail***

With might and main, a biting and gouging fight.

***toothbrush tree***

The black gum tree, especially young trees from which sprouts could be pulled for the toothbrush.

***tooth-dentist***

A dentist.

***Toothpicks*** made from a tree struck by lightning have a healing power in cleaning food and infectious matter from gums and rotting teeth.

***tootle***

Idle blowing on a flute or other wind instrument. "He goes about tootling on that horn and smoking marijuana."

***toot one's own horn***

To brag.

***tootsies***

Feet, a child's word.

***tootsy-wootsy***

Sweetheart, a beloved one.

***go over the top***

To raise the full amount or exceed a quota set, of people, events, or things.

To come out of the trenches and move toward the enemy in battle or war maneuvers.

***to top***

To better a bet or offer, to win an argument.

To cover a female in copulation.

To cut the top out of corn or tobacco plants.

***top dressing***

A final application of fertilizer to a crop, often nitrate of soda.

***topknot***

A crest of feathers on a fowl or hair on a person.

***topo***

Topographical map.

*top off*

To finish. "He topped off the barbecue with a gallon of 'simmon beer."

*Top of the day.*

A cheery good morning greeting.

*topping tobacco*

Cutting or breaking the top out of the tobacco plant to control its height. The preferred height is four and a half to five feet depending mainly on the richness of the sandy soil.

*tops*

The best, also to be in fine health.

*top sawyer*

The top man in a sawpit setup, the man who stood above while the bottom sawyer stood beneath and they sawed up and down with a long saw. This was the old method of cutting boards back in colonial times.

*topsy-turvy*

In disarray, everything upside down.

*toreckly*

Directly, immediately, soon. "I'll be there toreckly."

*to rights*

In a right condition, to clean up, to tidy up.

*torment*

Hell, the place of punishment in the hereafter. "Be a good little boy and you won't go to torment when you die."

*tory weed*

Also known as "hound's-tongue" or "sheep-lice." This European biennial usually grows from one to three feet tall and is found in pastures and waste places from Canada to North Carolina and west to Kansas and Minnesota. The leaves and roots are narcotic. In the old days this weed was used as a sedative, in coughs and also externally for burns, tumors, goiters, and the like.

*tossel*

Tassel.

*toss-up*

Of equal probability, an uncertainty of outcome.

*tot*

A small drink, also a tiny child.

***tote***

To carry, especially in one's arms. "My boy's getting so heavy I can't tote him."

***tote the rag off'n the bush***

To win a prize, take first place.

***tother***

The other, another.

***toting***

The custom of a Negro cook or servant's carrying (toting) victuals and maybe a piece of clothing now and then as an understood part of the job payment.

***touch***

A slight pain, a small bit. "Gimme just a touch of snuff."

One *touch* of nature makes the whole world kin.

***touch and go***

A delicately balanced situation of uncertain outcome.

***touched***

Looney, crazy.

***touch-me-not***

Also called "jewel weed." This plant grows in damp shady places from eastern Canada to Florida and was often used in dysentery and kidney troubles. The flowers sometimes were crushed into a watery pulp and used for dyeing.

***touchous* (techous)**

Over-sensitive, easy to anger, high-tempered. See "contrarious."

***Touch pitch***, and you'll be defiled.

***touchy***

Sensitive, ill-mannered, much the same as touchous. "You're so touchy lately I hardly dare speak to you."

as ***tough*** as a hickory stick

as ***tough*** as a lightwood (lightard) knot

as ***tough*** as a mule

as ***tough*** as hickory

as ***tough*** as leather

as ***tough*** as shoeleather

as *tough* as steel

as *tough* as whitleather

*tough it out*

To endure, to last on through.

*tough shit*

Hard luck, a tough job.

*tough titty*

A hard and distasteful duty. "Life is a tough titty but man's got to suck it."

A bad woman, a bawd, a tough character.

*towhead*

A derogatory reference to a child cotton mill worker.

*toys, folk*

In the old days there were no ten-cent stores and most all toys and dolls were homemade. Among the toys we children constructed for ourselves were beanshooters, hawk-callers, whirligigs, shucking pegs, waterwheels, cornstalk rock-throwers, slings, popguns, log-carts, grabs, tom walkers, tea sets, shuck dolls, water guns, and wooden swords.

*trab-ball*

A homemade ball, out of ravelled old stockings. We used to wind the string around a center wad until we had a ball about the size of a small apple. Then we would sew this "whipped down" until it was usable for the bat and run game of Old Cat. So far as I can find out, the term came from the ancient English game of trapball or trapbat.

*trace chains*

The chains by which a mule or horse pulls a plow or wagon.

*trace hook*

The hook that fastens the chains to the plow or wagon.

*track*

To pursue.

To follow correctly, as the hind wheels should follow in the track of the front. "Look at him, his feet don't track."

Tract.

*make tracks*

To run, to hurry away.

*trading*

Shopping. In the old days in the Valley no one ever spoke of "going to shop."  
It was always "to trade."

*trailing arbutus*

An early spring creeping plant, with heavenly pink blossoms. It grows from Michigan to Florida and best on the north side of the Valley hills. I once found acres of it growing among the scattered little scrub oak trees in the sand barrens of Harnett County. My wife and I have transplanted specimens of it several times to our Chatham County farm but have had poor success with it. A tincture of the plant was once used for kidney trouble, so the herb artists say.

*"Trail of the Lonesome Pine"*

A popular sentimental song of the '20s.

*Train* up a child in the way he should go, and when he is grown, he will not depart therefrom.

*traipsing*

To walk proguingly about. "A traipsing woman is a slattern."

*"Tramp, Tramp, Tramp the Boys Are Marching"*

A famous Civil War song.

*trap*

The mouth. "Shet your trap and you won't swallow so many flies."

*trapped* like a rat

*trash*

Poor whites, no 'count people.

*trash burner*

Jocular term for wood-burning locomotive or steamboat.

*trash mover*

A heavy downpour of rain.

*travel*

To go fast, to run. "Man, did he travel when the shooting started."

To move or walk. "He's so blind he can hardly see to travel."

*travel bug*

Desire to roam. "He's got the travel bug."

*tread snow*

The hissing of the snow that falls down the chimney into the fire. "Listen

and you can hear the tread snow in the fire there.”

*tread softly*

See “stinging nettle.”

*tread water*

To keep one’s head above water by treading swiftly up and down with one’s feet.

Make no progress but just hold one’s own.

Wasting time in waiting for a matter to eventuate.

Where your *treasure* is there will your heart be.

*treat*

An extra reward or bonus.

To pay another’s bill, as treat one to lunch.

*tree*

To run up a tree, as a dog chasing a possum up a tree. “Listen to that bark, that dog’s treed.”

A *tree* is known by its fruit.

A great *tree* makes a great fall.

When you have nothing else to do, be putting in of a *tree* — it will be growing when you are sleeping, lad.

*tree dog*

A hunting dog good for treeing game rather than running game.

*Tree frogs* hollering means rain.

*tree of heaven*

See “stink tree.”

*tree planting*

The planting of a tree to honor someone used to be a common practice but is now pretty much out of style.

*the trembles* (weak-trembles)

Palsy, the shakes.

*trembling* like a leaf

*trick*

To conjure.

An attractive thing or person. “Look at that new Chevy, ain’t that a trick!”

Also a girl. "She's a cute trick."

*trickets*

Trinkets.

*trickly*

Trickling.

*trick or treat*

A Hallowe'en ritual when children come to the door in their masks and makeup on Hallowe'en night, chirping out "Trick or treat." If candies, fruits and goodies are not forthcoming, the children have the right to play some trick on the house.

*trifling*

Lazy, no 'count.

There have been many trifling people in the Valley and one of the triflingest was old Steve McDaniel. He took to his bed from pure laziness so the neighbors would feed him, claiming to be bedridden by palsy. People did fetch him food for a year or two. Then the wag Zack Broadhuss exposed his fraud by hiding behind his house one night and shouting fire and making a great hullabaloo. Old Steve came tearing out in his nightgown and was mad as thunder when he found he'd been tricked. But soon he was back in bed again, and he really was struck with the palsy this time, followed by a stroke. Nobody believed him though, not until a week or two later when he actually died. Of course, they said it was the way the Lord had paid him back for his playing the hypocrite.

*trigger*

A wooden stick arranged under a deadfall or trap for trapping a bird or animal.

To set off. "When Jesse called Mack an S.O.B. — that triggered the whole fight."

*trigger itch*

Nervous fingers with a gun, one over-quick to shoot.

*triggery*

Fine detail carpentering, fine tracery woodwork.

*trim*

To cheat, also to castrate. "When the signs are right, I've got to trim my hogs."

Neat, slim.

*Trim* one's sails to fit the wind.

*The Trinity*

The Father, Son and Holy Ghost in the Christian faith. Many an irreverent wag in the Valley speaks of these three as “the Old Man, Junior, and Spooky.”

*trinkling*

Trickling. “And the blood come a-trinkling down.”

*tripe*

Anything worthless.

*trivet*

The three-legged little iron stool or holder for a cooking utensil to be set on.

*Trojan* (Trojas)

A hard-working energetic person. “My oldest boy is a regular Trojan for work.”

*trollop*

A slovenly, slattern woman.

*tromp (tromple, tromping)*

To tramp, to trample.

*troop*

To move determinedly. “He went trooping after that woman but he never caught her.”

*a trot*

A pony, an English translation of material in a foreign language, say, Latin.

*trots*

Diarrhea. “I’ve had the trots for about a week and I’m plumb wore out.”

*trotters*

Feet, as pigs’ feet.

*trot the mule*

Use of a string by inmates to transfer a small item or gift from one prison cell to another.

Never *trouble trouble* till *trouble* troubles you.

*trouble-shooter*

A peacemaker, an umpire.

*trounce*

To defeat, to whip.

*Troy* was not taken in a day.



*truck*

Dealings, association with. "I don't have no truck with that fellow, no sir."

Trash, barter, trade.

*truckle bed*

Trundle bed.

as *true* as a die

as *true* as an arrow

as *true* as a plumb

as *true* as steel

*true blue*

Honest, reliable, aboveboard.

*True love's* the very weft of life, but it sometimes comes through a sorrowful shuttle.

*trump*

A dependable person, a first-rate thing.

Anything that turns out lucky.

*blow one's own trumpet*

To brag, to boast.

*trumpet vine*

This plant was and still is possessed of a bad name in the Valley, for it's supposed to be especially poisonous to children's skin, almost as bad as poison ivy. I used to play around it and climb up it when I was a child but never was hurt by it. There's one thing about the vine though I've noticed in more recent years, and that is it seems to be a thing almost of instinct. It will climb right on up to the top of the highest tree before it begins sending out its branches. I wonder how it knows when it's got to where it's going. But there are plenty of plants and things in the Valley that seems to have this foreknowledge, for instance, the Venus'-flytrap, the be-shame bush (sensitive plant), aspen tree and others.

*trundle bed*

A low children's bed on rollers, usually kept under the grownups' bed during the day and pulled out at night.

*truss*

An elastic belt with a pad to correct hernias or ruptures. A number of my boyhood friends wore trusses, available from Sears and Roebuck who always

carried a full line at all prices in the old days from 44 cents to \$4.75.

*Trust* in God but keep your powder dry.

I wouldn't *trust* him as far as a cat can spit.

I wouldn't *trust* him as far as I could throw him.

I wouldn't *trust* him from here to the gatepost.

I wouldn't *trust* him out of my sight.

*trustle*

Trestle.

*Truth*

A game. In this the players pile their hands one on top of the other, and then draw out in turn. As each person draws his or her hand from the pile in sequence, beginning at the bottom, he has to answer truly any question put by the group.

*Truth* begets trust and trust begets *truth*.

*Truth* crushed to earth shall rise again,  
The eternal years of God are hers,  
But error, wounded, writhes in pain  
And dies amid his worshippers.  
(Old saying from W.C. Bryant.)

*Truth* is mighty and will prevail.

*Truth* may have legs but scandal has wings.

It's the gospel *truth*.

It's the honest *truth*.

*Truth Meeting*

A children's game usually played by girls who gather in a huddle and agree to tell the truth, no matter what. Some of the questions provoke great hilarity and sometimes embarrassment.

*Truth or Consequences*

A game in which, when one is asked a question, he must answer truly or take the consequences. Sometimes the question is so embarrassing that the player would rather take the consequences, such as a pinch or a bang on the head or a silly trick.

*truth pledges*

To affirm it strongly say "I cross my heart and hope to die," or

“Certain true  
 Black and blue  
 Lay me down  
 And cut me in two—  
 Really and truly!”

*try*

An effort, experiment. “You never know what you can do till you give it a try.”

like *trying* to catch wind in a sieve

*Tryon's Palace*

Once the most beautiful residence in Colonial America. It was built in 1767-70 by William Tryon, royal governor of North Carolina in New Bern, the seat of his government. Besides being the governor's residence, it was the statehouse and contained an assembly hall, council chamber and public offices. Except for one wing, it was destroyed by fire in 1798, and that soon fell into decay.

A number of public-spirited citizens, led by Mrs. Virginia Latham of Greensboro, finally got the palace and gardens restored to their former glory. It is now a showplace for the nation.

Every *tub* should stand on its own bottom.

*tubby*

Chubby.

*tuberculosis cure*

Of the many folk remedies and cures in the Valley for tuberculosis, a concoction made from flaxseed was supposed to be one of the best. Take, say, one pound of flaxseed and boil them in a half gallon of water along with a dozen unpeeled lemons. Add during the boiling a quart of strained honey. When the mixture has boiled down to one quart in volume, strain out the flaxseeds and lemon seeds and hull. Thereafter, take one teaspoonful every hour indefinitely.

Another cure was to mix sawdust from a lightwood knot with whiskey.

*tuckahoe*

The large starchy root of this plant was used for food by the Indians.

*tucker bag*

A sort of duffle bag for personal belongings.

*tuckered (out)*

Tired out, exhausted. “I'm completely tuckered (out) after doing my

Monday's washing."

*tucking comb*

A comb used for fastening a woman's hair in at the back.

*tudder*

Same as t'other, the other, that other.

*tug chains*

The short chains fastened to the hames used for securing the shafts of a wagon or cart.

*Tug of War*

A game of strength. Two teams line up, boys and girls if agreed on. A rag or handkerchief is tied at the middle of the rope and then two lines are drawn on the ground at right angles to the rope some distance apart — ten, fifteen or twenty feet, whatever is agreed on. Then the rope is stretched between the two groups so that the marker is exactly halfway between the lines. At a signal the teams begin pulling against each other. The team which succeeds in pulling the marker across the line on its side is the winner of that pull. A number of pulls may be made.

*tuk*

Past tense of take.

*tulip tree*

The yellow poplar. This large timber tree is common in rich soil throughout the United States. It is especially plentiful in the Valley. There is a tulip tree, known as the Davie Poplar, which is a rather sacrosanct object on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It was under this tree that General William R. Davie took lunch in 1789 when he and his committee chose the site for the University.

Yellow poplar timber is especially good for veneering since it takes a higher polish than any other American wood.

*tumble*

A try or test. "Give me a tumble, won't you?" Also means sexual intercourse, as He tumbled that woman.

*tumblesets*

Somersaults.

*tumble turd*

A tumble bug. Also a term of derision for a person.

*tummy tickler*

A sudden bump in a road, same as a bullhead, used to turn the water. See "thanky-ma'am."

*tune*

Attitude, point of view. "Put the shoe on the other foot and you'll change your tune."

*tune up*

To get ready, prepare to. "Look at that baby's mouth — he's tuning up to cry."

*tunnel bed*

Trundle bed.

*tup*

To copulate.

*turd*

Dung, feces.

*Turk*

A rough person, a fighter, a quarreler. "Them Oxendines always were regular Turks."

*turkentine*

Turpentine.

*turkey*

A failure, a bust. "That movie sure was a turkey."

*didn't say turkey*

Paid no attention, ignored one. "He went off and didn't say turkey to anybody."

*turkeyberry (turkleberry)*

Partridgeberry.

*turkey caller*

A device for imitating the call of a turkey.

Cousin Hardy Draughan of Dunn invented one consisting of a little resonant poplar wood box with a thin wooden lip against which he would scrape a piece of slate; the result was a sound exactly like a call of a turkey. He sold this contraption to Sears and Roebuck for a goodly sum, and I used to see it advertised in the catalog.

*turkey cock*

A vain person.

*turkey day*

Thanksgiving.

*turkey eggs*

Freckles.

*“Turkey in the Straw”*

Another popular play-party and fiddling piece in the Valley as elsewhere through the South and Southwest. The tune was a prime favorite at fiddlers’ conventions. I labored many an hour at night myself, trying to learn how to fiddle it the way I had seen old John Riardin do it. And my sister Mary would patiently play a chorded accompaniment to the squeakings of my Sears-Roebuck instrument. But I could never bring it off.

As Carl Sandburg said, “there are thousands of words to the tune, depending on the creative word-ability of the singer or singers.”

“As I was a-going down the road  
I met a Mr. Tairpin and I met a Mr. Toad.  
The toad and tairpin begun to sing,  
The tairpin cut out the pigeon wing.  
“Turkey in the hay—heigh heigh heigh!  
Turkey in the straw—haw haw haw!  
Funniest thing I ever saw  
Was that old turkey scratching in the straw.

“I went out to milk and I didn’t know how,  
I milked a goat instead of a cow.  
The goat he bounced and gave a buck  
And sent me sprawling in the muck.  
“Turkey in the hay—heigh heigh heigh!  
Turkey in the straw—haw haw haw!  
Funniest thing I ever saw  
Was that old turkey scratching in the straw.”

*turkey shoot*

A contest of marksmanship in which the turkey was sometimes the object shot at as well as the prize given for the winner.

*turkey tail out*

To fork, to spread out in little tributaries.

*turkey trot*

A dance, also a fast-swaying walk.

*turkey-trotting pukers*

Constant vomiting.

*turkey wing*

A fan or duster made from a turkey’s wing.

*turkle*

Turtle.

*turkleberry*

Partridgeberry.

*Turk's-cap lily*

One of the most beautiful of all lilies, gorgeous with its Turk's cap. Last summer when my wife and I were walking in the deep oak woods east of our house, I saw a spot of gold shining low in a little opening off to the left. We ran there and stood in awe over the little lovely creature, alone, perfect. We will watch for it next summer. It's a sacrilege to say with the pharmacists that a tincture of the fresh bulb will cause constipation, mouth-burning and restlessness.

*turn*

Manner, behavior, appearance. "Zebedee's oldest girl sure has a pretty turn."

Fright. "I almost stepped on a copperhead snake out there and it sure give me a turn."

To begin an action, to do. "I had this intestinal flu and I turned in and took me a good dost of turpentine and ginger and it cured me right off."

A load, an armful. "Hurry out to the woodpile, son, and bring me a turn of stovewood."

Time or sequence. "It's my turn to swing now, so git off."

To become sour or fermented.

To nauseate. "That bait of beef turnt my stomach — so look out, here goes."

Talent, knack, ability. "I've just read a piece by Jonathan Daniels in 'The Nuisance and Disturber,' and he's got a real turn for writing, he has."

To change one's belief or politics. "He was a Primitive Baptist for a long time, but now he's turned Christian Scientist."

One good *turn* deserves another.

*Turnabout* is fair play.

*turned out*

Dismissed. "After she danced she was turned out of the church."

Evicted.

The final result. "Those children turned out fine."

*Caroline Turner*

The wife of Dr. Henry Marshall Turner. She lived in the plastered, brick-columned house overlooking the east bank of the Cape Fear River, and there this redheaded woman ruled as queen over the plantation. The doctor went away to war and she fell into a decline. I gave to the University of North Carolina some old letters of hers in which she pours out her complaints and laments about the cruel and wasteful war. She wrote a little book of poems, entitled *Star in the West*, about looking toward far-off Texas where so many of her Valley people had migrated. I've never been able to find a copy of it.

*Dr. Henry Marshall Turner*

A doughty and powerful man in the Valley. A fierce man, a brave man, and a tortured soul he was. He was reputed to be the first man who ever operated on a person for appendicitis. A small pamphlet has been written about him and a copy can be found in the library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Up and down the country he went tending the sick, trying to amputate here, bleeding a wench there, and rolling his pills and doing for the dying. And all the while his mind was turmoiling with plans for the development of the Valley country — great timbering operations, his fields and crops and drainage and the river, yes, that river. The Cape Fear River always fascinated him the way it did Colonel A.S. McNeill. It teased him in his waking and in his lying down. Many a night he lay there in his mansion above the river, dreaming and planning, while his redheaded Caroline slept soundly away by his side. He could hear the rush of the river at freshet time down below the house, and he ached in his soul to tame it and make it a highway of commodity and commerce. Finally he went into partnership with Colonel A.S. McNeill and others, and they attempted to canalize the river and make it navigable. But the river whipped him and all the others. All that remains of their efforts are the great gashes along the side of the river, now overgrown with bullace vines and poison ivy and inhabited only by the furtive creatures of the forest.

*turn in*

To go to bed. "It's time to turn in, folkses."

*turnip*

A cheap watch, same as cymling. "What time is it by your turnip?"

You can't get blood out of a *turnip* but you can get the *turnip*.

*turnip greens*

A favorite vegetable dish in the Valley. When the turnip leaves are gathered fresh and cooked for a good while with hog jowl or a piece of good sidemeat, they are hard to beat.



*turn loose*

To move, to act. "Then he turnt loose and hit me right in the face."

*turn off*

To accomplish, to do a job of work easily. "He can turn off work faster'n anybody I ever saw."

*turn off fair*

To have fair weather after foul.

*turn one's back*

To dismiss, to reject.

*turn one's stomach*

To disgust, to make sick.

*turnout*

Dress, a show, a rig. "Man, where are you going in all that turnout?"

The intersection of a side road or path.

*turn out*

To go wild, to become lawless. "Have you heard about Manly's boy Jeff?— He just turned out."

*turnover*

A small piece of pie, so called because the dough-crust is folded over the filling for cooking.

*turn over a new leaf*

To resolve on reformation.

*turns over*

A horse or mule is worth a hundred dollars for each time he turns over in wallowing. "Look at that mule — turned over three times — I'll take \$300 for him." We had a sorry old mule we traded for on our farm. The very first night we turned her loose in the barn lot, she looked around, scraped at the ground and bit with one of her hooves, then lay down and began wallowing. She turned over four times. In a few days we found out she wasn't worth killing — one of the worst balkers we'd ever seen. Since then I've had no stock in the above old saying.

*turn tables on*

To get revenge, give back as good as one gets.

*turn the corner*

To get past a difficult crisis, convalesce.

*to turn up one's toenails*

To die.

*turpentine*

Turpentine.

*turpentine*

A teaspoonful of turpentine taken nine mornings in a row will produce an abortion. Miss Effie Upton tried it fifteen mornings in a row, so 'twas said, but she had to go on and have her woods colt just the same, shame or no shame.

*turpentine and sugar*

A favorite old Valley medicine. A teaspoonful each morning is supposed to be good for the kidneys. Lennie Oxendine said he used to take it regular — for a while he did — but then he got to passing blood and he had to quit it. “These old-timey remedies,” he said, “ain’t a manner account.”

*turpentine distilling*

Once a prime occupation in North Carolina, “the home of the longleaf pine.” The Valley, from near the ocean on up into the Piedmont, was covered with these pines, some of them of great height and size. I’ve mentioned elsewhere that we had one pine on our farm twenty-nine feet in circumference three feet above the ground and over a hundred feet high. These pines would be boxed, then scraped on the face above the box for the resin to exude and slide into the box. Then this would be dipped out and carried to the distilling vats. When I was a boy, these turpentine stills were to be found everywhere, only a few miles apart. For several decades North Carolina was known as the tar, pitch and turpentine state. Now it is the tobacco state.

If a *turtle* bites you he won’t let go till sundown or till it thunders.

*turtlehead*

The flowers of this perennial herb resemble the head of a turtle, and therefore its name. Another name is chelone and still another, fish-mouth or snake-mouth. A tonic made from its leaves is supposed to be a good treatment for worms. And it is said that the Indians used it as a tonic and laxative.

*tush*

A long tooth, a fang.

*tush hog*

A boar.

*tussick*

A small clump of marshy grass or moss in a swamp.

*tussle*

A wrestling match, a struggle.

*tussy-mussy*

A nosegay, a bouquet.

T-U turkey, T-Y ty,  
T-U turkey buzzard's eye.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

*twaddle*

Empty talk, stupid stuff, nonsense.

*twang*

Tang, taste. "That apple cider's already got a good twang to it."

*" 'Twas the Night Before Christmas "*

A most popular Christmas poem which tells all about Old Nick (Santa Claus, not the Devil) and his reindeer — Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen — and how he drives through the night over houses, almost always snowy houses, even in Florida, and brings his sack of fabulous gifts down the chimneys for all good little girls and boys.

*twayblade*

A rather delicate perennial wild flower one-half to two feet tall. It has small greenish flowers and leaves that are somewhat oval. My wife and I always keep a sharp lookout for this shy flower on walks through our woods and sometimes we are rewarded with a sight of its humble drooping petals. If it has any medicinal use, I've never heard of it, which sets it apart even more from its fellows.

*'tween whiles*

At intervals, between whiles.

*Twelfth Night*

The evening preceding or the evening of Epiphany, a Christmas feast traditionally celebrated on January 6 or on the first Sunday after New Year. In the Western churches it mainly commemorates the visit of the three wise men to the infant Jesus as reported in the second chapter of Matthew.

The Negroes in the Valley used to say that on the twelfth night after Christmas the sun rose twice, and the cattle would kneel down on the holy occasion. Once when Lammy O'Quinn was bawling out his Negro hired hand, Romulus Gibbs, Romulus rubbed his eyes, looked out and said, "Lawdy, Mr. Lammy, I was waiting for the second sunrise." And Lammy, being Lammy, said, "I was up early and the first sunrise has already come and gone. Get out'n that bed, you bag of lazy bones!" And Romulus couldn't

disprove him and so had to hump himself. I got an old saying from Lammy long ago which I like — “Don’t call on the Lord unless you know his name.”

*twell*

Till.

*Twelve pears* hanging high,  
Twelve men came riding by.  
Each took a pear,  
Left eleven hanging there.  
(Riddle — One of the men  
was named Each.)

*'tweren't*

It wasn't. “ 'Tweren't my fault he stumbled and fell.”

*twerp*

A silly, irritating person.

*twict*

Twice.

As the *twig* is bent so is the tree inclined.

*twin bluebells*

Ruellia, sometimes known as hairy ruellia, a fine little plant to have in a wild flower garden. Its name is rightly descriptive.

*Twinkle*, twinkle little star,  
How I wonder what you are,  
Up above the world so high  
Like a diamond in the sky.  
  
When the blazing sun is gone,  
When it nothing shines upon,  
Then you show your little light.  
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.  
  
Then the traveler in the dark  
Thanks you for your tiny spark.  
He couldn't see which way to go  
If you did not twinkle so.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

When we children would be picking cotton in the fall and on into the dark of evening, we would sometimes straighten up our aching backs and glimpse the glimmer of a star high in the sky and then recite this rhyme with warm and tender feeling for the little peek-a-boo creature far, far away. And we

would often recite the whole "poem" so far as we could remember it.

*twirp*

A fool, an odd fellow, a ninny.

*twist around one's finger*

To have control over. "That woman can twist her husband around her finger whenever she wants to."

*twisted seventy ways from Sunday*

Out of order, gone all awry.

*twisting*

To get game from a hollow tree by twisting it out with a long stick with a small forked end. Often our dogs would tree a rabbit up a hollow tree, and we would cut off a long sprout of dogwood or black gum bush and run it up the hollow till we reached the trapped little animal. Then we would twist the sprout until it had fastened in the skin of the animal and gradually pull it forth, never minding its pitiful squealings. Cruel, cruel!

*twist one's arm*

To bring pressure to bear, to use special influence to get a desired action or result. "Yessir, that LBJ knows how to twist old Dirksen's arm when he needs to."

*twitch*

A short, twisted noose or loop of rope attached to the end of a stick some two feet long used to slip on the upper lip of a mule or horse and to be twisted tight enough to keep the animal from rearing out of reach of the veterinarian's medicine-drenching. See "drench."

As the old birds sing, the young ones *twitter*.

*twitters*

Flutters, excited talk or behavior.

*Two* heads are better'n one or what's a cabbage for?

*Two* heads are better than one or why do folks marry?

It takes *two* to make a bargain and one to break it.

It takes *two* to make a quarrel.

*put two and two together*

To reach a conclusion about an obscure matter by putting the clues logically together.

*two cents*

Of poor value, not much good. "I don't feel like two cents today."

*two-dollar bill*

A good luck item, especially one with a corner torn off. Once a two-dollar bill was thought to be unlucky, so I've heard. What caused the change, I don't know.

*two-double*

Double. "It takes two-double reins to hold that horse."

*two hens fighting*

A sign that two strange women were coming and they would be strumpets and the wife had better get busy making up to her husband.

*in two*

Broken, disconnected. "This cord has come in two."

*two jumps ahead of the sheriff*

To be on the edge of bankruptcy, also to be dodging the law.

*Two little birds* sat on a limb,  
One named Jack, the other, Jim,  
Fly away, Jack, fly away, Jim.  
Come back, Jack, come back, Jim.  
(Rhyme to go with the finger game.  
See "Jack and Jim.")

*two of a kind*

Of the same sort.

*two-time*

To deceive. Often applied to a man who dates two women, or vice versa.

*no two ways about it*

No argument about it, used for emphasis.

*two whoops and a holler*

A measurement of distance. "He lives only two whoops and a holler from here."

*tyke*

A dog.

*typhoid fever*

Once a blighting curse in the Valley as elsewhere, along with pneumonia.

A number of my youthful acquaintances perished from the bacterial disease. And often one who recovered suffered some ill effect. One of my boyhood pals was a bright student at old Pleasant Union School. He contracted typhoid fever and during its siege was delirious for two or more days. Finally he recovered, but his brightness was gone. Thereafter he was

dull in his mind and of poor memory. A friend said to me, "That fever just about burnt his brains up." Modern sanitary conditions on the farm and in the cities along with antibiotics have helped the disease to pretty much disappear.

# U

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## *udder*

The other.

A derogatory term for a woman, especially an elderly or ugly woman.

as *ugly* as a gouge

as *ugly* as a mud fence

as *ugly* as a mud fence trimmed in tar

as *ugly* as a scarecrow

as *ugly* as homemade sin

as *ugly* as homemade sin cooked in a fireplace

as *ugly* as homemade soap

as *ugly* as Satan

as *ugly* as sin

as *ugly* as sin and nearly as agreeable

as *ugly* as the devil

*ugly* enough to turn milk sour

## *ugly off*

To peter out, to quit, to fade away.

## *uh-uh*

A grunt of assent.



*umbershoot*

Umbrella.

*umble*

Humble.

*'umble pie*

Apologies. Same as eat crow.

Opening an *umbrella* in the house brings bad luck.

*umbrella tree*

The chinaberry tree, a native of many parts of Asia and now naturalized in the southern United States. It has lovely sweet flowers in May and its umbrella shape provides good shade.

*ums*

Them. "Muh fed ums some wild cherry tea and ums pyeartened right up."

*unaccustomed as I am*

A speaker's overworked introductory phrase.

*unbeknownst*

Unknown, secretly. "All unbeknownst to me he got my brother to sign that deed."

*Uncle Benny*

A Franklin car.

*Uncle Sam*

The United States.

*Uncle Sam's* a good old man,  
Washed his face in the frying pan,  
Combed his head with a wagon wheel,  
Died with the toothache in his heel.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

*uncumstand*

Understand.

*under*

By. "He goes under the name of John Martin now."

*undercoat*

Underskirt.

To *understand* all is to forgive all.

*under the belt*

To get control of, to finish, complete. "He got that tough job under his belt and now is ready for another."

*under the thumb of*

To be under the control of. "That woman Sal Weaver sure has got old Zeb under her thumb."

*under the weather*

Ill, feeling poorly.

*undo*

To untie, to unhitch. "Undo the horse and come on in."

*Uneasy* lies the head that wears the crown.

*unfitted*

Not fit.

*unfrock*

To disgrace, to dismiss from a position of influence, as to unfrock a minister.

*unglued*

Emotionally upset. "Last fall I came all unglued and had a bad nervous breakdown."

*unhandy*

Inconvenient, awkward.

In *union* is strength.

*the union flag*

A baby's diaper.

*United* we stand, divided we fall.

An *unjust* man is an abomination.

*unknown tongues*

The barbaric vocables and syllables given forth by frenzied religious fanatics when they are in the spell of their evangelical fervor. I once copied down some of the words at a meeting at William's Grove. Among them were such words as "hoofy-beigh-Jesus" and "hokum-ma-loki."

It is *unlucky* to destroy an ant bed.

*unmentionables*

An old-fashioned term for women's drawers or any undergarments.

*unreal* as a dream

*unrip*

Rip.

*until when*

A redundant phrase of time used for emphasis. "He beat me so bad until when he let me up I was too weak to move."

*unvarnished truth*

Absolute truth.

*up*

To act, bring out. "Rorie Matthews upped with his gun and shot Dan McLeod dead."

For emphasis. "Drink it all up, I tell you."

*up against it*

In difficult circumstances.

*up a horse's ass (a pig's ass)*

A mild expletive of derision or denial.

*up and about*

To be convalescent, to be getting around despite infirmity.

*Up and at 'em!*

A command to action.

*up and coming*

Progressive, energetic.

*up and down*

Completely. "I really told him up and down."

Vacillating.

*up and gone*

Restless, a job changer. "He's one of these up and gone fellows and I can't use him."

*on the up and up*

Trustworthy. Also recovering from illness.

*up a stump*

In a tough spot needing decision or action.

*up a tree*

In difficulty.

*up by light*

Up by dawn.

*up for grabs*

Available to the highest bidder, ready for taking.

*up in arms*

Excited, angry.

*up in G*

High up, proud acting.

*Up Jenks (Jenkins)*

A very popular guessing game in the Valley when I was growing up, and one that often provoked a lot of merry laughter. Players are seated on opposite sides of a table. The side having a coin for playing sits with hands below the table and one of the players takes the coin. At the command "Up jenks!" the hands are brought up and held closed in the air. At the second command "Down jenks!" they are slapped flat on the table, palms down. The leader of the searching side then selects a turned-down palm, hoping to find the coin. The number of misses are counted in the score. When the lucky palm is upturned, the score is noted and the coin changes sides. The game goes on till the players tire of it, or until one side is so far ahead of the other that there's no chance of the opponent's catching up.

*up one side and down the other*

Completely, entirely, absolutely. "I gave him hail Columbia up one side and down the other and he promised to do better."

*up one's sleeve*

To be secretive, to have a surprise or undisclosed plan of action.

*upper crust*

The aristocracy.

*upper hand*

An advantage.

*uppers*

The upper part of one's shoe. To be down on one's uppers is to have the soles worn out and to be in a beggarly condition. "I hear he is down on his uppers — stone broke."

*upper story*

The higher part of the brain, the head.

*upping block*

A block or step for mounting a horse, especially used by ladies in the old days.

*ups*

Advantages. "I've got the ups on you now, hosscake, and you'd better cry uncle."

*ups-a-daisy*

A phrase usually spoken when one is playfully pitching a baby up in the air, fondling or swinging it.

*upscuddle*

A quarrel, a disturbance.

*upset*

Nauseated. To have a sick stomach, to be vomiting.

*upslop*

Vomit.

*up salt river*

In a forlorn situation.

*up shit creek and no paddle*

To be in a precarious condition.

*upshot*

The final result.

*have the ups on*

To have the advantage over.

*upstairs*

To be proud, snooty, disdainful. "Since she inherited money she's all upstairs."

*up the river*

To be in prison, to be in difficulty.

*up tight*

Tense.

*up to*

Doing, intending, planning. "He's not up to much good if you ask me."

*up to now*

Until this time or moment.

*up to snuff*

Equal to the occasion, to be feeling well.

*up yonder*

Reference to the upper rooms of a house as contrasted to the kitchen. Also far off, up in the sky.

Heaven.

*use*

To frequent. "In the old days the wild turkeys would use around here but now you don't hear of 'em any more."

*Use* not today what tomorrow will need.

No more *use* than a man's titties or the pope's balls.

The *used* key is always bright.

The *used* key is never rusty.

*used to*

Once upon a time, formerly. "Used to, people seemed to be more neighborly than they are now."

*used to be*

Formerly, in the old days. "It used to be much colder than now."

*usen*

Use. "The coons always usen around here."

*uster could*

Used to could, once was able to. "He uster could pull five hundred bundles of fodder a day, but now he's old and can't pull a dozen."

# V

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## *Valley*

The Valley in this collection refers to that geographic area coursed by the Cape Fear River which is formed in Chatham County, near Chapel Hill, N.C., by the confluence of the Deep and Haw rivers, flows through Harnett County between Lillington and Buie's Creek, where Paul Green was born and lived his childhood, through Fayetteville and into the Atlantic Ocean near Wilmington, N.C. (Ed. note)

## *valley*

The sunken v-shaped jointure or gutter in the roof of a house.

as *vain* as a peacock

## *vamp*

The upper part of the shoe. The pedal on an organ.

Also to court, flirt or entice. "That girl started vamping him as soon as they met."

## *vamoose*

To scat, to hurry, to flee.

## *vanilla plant*

A plant from eighteen inches to four feet in height with numerous heads of purplish and sometimes white flowers in a terminal cluster. It grows in grassy bog areas all through the Valley and in the old days, so they say, was used as an adulterant in tobacco. Tea made from the aromatic leaves is a good stimulant. Also cuttings from the plant were once used in closets as protection against moths.

## *varge*

Verge.

*varina*

A special kind of tobacco. The little tobacco town of Varina in the Valley is named for this species. According to B.W. Green in *The Virginia Word Book*, the town was named for a town in South America where the great South American patriot Bolivar lived. In *The North Carolina Gazeteer* (1968) William Powell ascribes the name of Varina, N.C., to “the first postmaster’s wife, who used the fanciful name in her courtship correspondence.”

*varmint*

A queer frightful creature.

*Vengeance* is mine, saith the Lord.

*venture* (dubs, thribs, etc.)

A phrase of objection in the game of marbles. “I said venture dubs first and you’ve got to put one o’ them marbles back.”

*Venus’s-flytrap*

This is certainly one of the world’s most unique plants. The two-lobed leaf of these small perennials is red inside and attracts insects which light to enjoy the spread-out viand. The lobes, about an inch or more long, suddenly close over their quarry and devour it by absorption. The eating done, they open again and offer their apparently innocent food to the needy. This plant used to be prolific in the lower part of the Valley. A few years ago one could see it for sale on the streets of Chapel Hill. It is now protected by law.

*Venus’s-looking-glass*

A slender erect little annual from one-half to two feet high with purple flowers. It blossoms from late April through August. It actually is not a flower but a little weed and is often a pest in a vegetable garden. So far as I know, it has no medicinal value.

*verbena*

This white vervain grows from Maine to Texas and is considered a choice herb in the flower garden. It is an emetic and vulnerary, and is a good protection against fever.

*verge*

Part of the mechanism of a clock, actually the spindle of the balance wheel.

*vetch*

A common trailing vine that grows throughout the Valley and is found especially in grain fields. Some people identify it with the tare spoken of in the Bible. The seeds are detergent and, according to the old horse and cow doctors, it causes the bloat in animals and also is injurious to swine.



*vim and vigor*

High spirits, exhilaration, a surplus of energy.

*one's own vine and fig tree*

One's own home, one's cherished domicile, one's freehold.

*violet*

One of the most popular little flowers on earth. There are some sixteen different kinds of violets that grow in the Valley, running from the bearded white violet through the early blue and on down to the tri-lobed leafed yellow violet. This flower has been praised by musicians and poets through the ages. One of our happiest experiences when we were children was to go into the woods in the early spring, especially where the land had been burnt over, and gather great handfuls of violets and bury our noses in them deliciously. A poultice made from the roots of the common "blue" violet is a good remedy for bone felons and boils.

*vinegary*

Sour-tempered, surly, irascible.

*VIP*

The abbreviation for Very Important Person.

*viper's bugloss*

Sometimes called blue-weed, it is found in dry meadows and pastures in the central and northern part of the Valley. The root contains a poisonous alkaloid which produces eruptions and irritations of the skin.

*virgin birth*

Giving birth to an offspring without male fertilization or fatherhood.

*Virginia bluebell*

Prescribed for chest ailments.

*Virginia butterfly pea*

It is much like the common butterfly pea and grows in dry or sandy soils.

*Virginia creeper*

Sometimes called the American ivy. It is a strong climbing vine common in the woods through the Valley. This plant is popular for use in decorating chimneys and shares its popularity only with the English ivy.

*Virginia day flower*

A beautiful and delicate plant which flowers in July and grows in either moist or medium dry soil. Not long ago my wife and I discovered two of these plants growing along the edge of the little stream that flows from our spring back of the house. Nearly every day in walking along our path we would

turn off to see these little flowers. According to my friend Burlage, it is a good relaxant and works well on constipation.

*Virginia reel*

A popular folk dance.

*Virginia snakeroot*

This is sometimes called the pelican flower and has wondrous medicinal values. In fact, it is highly recommended as an erotic stimulant. In a play I once wrote called *The Founders*, my comedian married a woman who was barren and finding this remedy he took to snakeroot and ate a lot of it. "Till I fairly foamed at the mouth," he said. But the results were good, for his barren wife before many months had gone by presented him with twin sons, one of whom he named Thomas Dale after the governor and the other John Rolfe after Pocahontas' husband.

*virgin's-bower*

The clematis, sometimes called Virginia virgin's bower. It grows in wet waste places and in the thickets and borders of woods and is found throughout the Valley. It has been reported to be useful in the treatment of syphilitic eruptions, skin diseases and itch — diseases coarsely antagonistic to its gentle name.

*Virtue* is its own reward.

A *virtuous* woman, her price is above rubies.

*visitors*

Menses. "I can't make love with you. I've got visitors."

*vittles*

Victuals.

*void*

To defecate, to empty the bowels. "I wanter void, Cap'n, wanter void," said the convict.

*volunteers*

Unwanted plants that spring up unexpectedly.

*vomitwort*

Indian tobacco, or tobacco lobelia. This herb grows in fields and along roadsides in the upper part of the Valley. It is supposed to be good for dozens of ailments such as whooping cough, hernia, headache, tremors, nausea and vomiting. It has also been used in the treatment of epilepsy, pneumonia, hysteria, cramps and convulsions. It is poisonous to animals and therefore in their good sense they let it alone. And now, with all the new vitamin pills and mycin drugs, man is letting the plant alone also.

*voodoo*

Black magic or witchcraft is supposed to have come originally from the West Indies. Belief in voodoo is still widespread.

Not too long ago I went to a Negro woman's house in Chapel Hill and noticed all sorts of queer marks in the sandy walk before her front door. She saw me looking at them and explained that she had put them there to protect herself from the old black evil eye that was "proguing round and about."

*vygrous (vigorous)*

Dangerous, wild. "That boar hog is mighty vygrous and you better watch out for him."

# W

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*wad*

A roll of greenbacks.

A chew of tobacco.

A reason, a convincing argument, a conclusive and final statement. "He shot his wad and still nobody was convinced."

*wade into*

To attack vigorously.

*waffle*

A mess, a mistake.

To waver, to be uncertain, to hesitate.

*wag*

To move on, to go slowly. "Come on, we'll wag on down the road."

The *wages* of sin is death.

*on the wagon*

To be a teetotaler, practicing abstinence from liquor or any strong drink, especially by one who enjoys imbibing.

*wagtail*

A wanton woman.

*waiter*

A tray. Uncle Beirne said, "I want a waiter," and so they called for the "busboy."

An attendant on the groom at a wedding. "I can't come Wednesday. I'm a waiter at Luke Cavin's wedding."

*wait on*

To be an usher or attendant or a groomsman at a wedding. "I waited on Bob when he got married and he done the same for me when I hitched up."

*wake-robin*

The trillium. Although its name refers to the waking of the robins, the plant comes to leaf usually long after the robins have already waked up and gone on their way north. This bulbous plant grows in rich shady woodland soils and goes by a dozen or more different names such as birthroot, ground lily, Indian shamrock, red Benjamin, bumblebee-root and so on. Some people even call it daffydown dilly appropriate to the old children's folk song:

"Daffydown dilly has now come to town  
In a red petticoat and a green gown."

The roots of the wake-robin are astringent and tonic.

*"Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie"*

A popular sentimental song and one our quartet used to sing often.

*Wake up, Jacob, day's a-breaking*  
Peas in the pot and hoecake baking.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

*walk*

A path, usually one leading to the front or back door of a house. "Throw the newspaper on the walk."

*walk a chalk line*

To behave circumspectly, to mind one's p's and q's.

*walking-around money*

Small change, spending money.

*walking on air*

Highly elated.

As I was *walking* through the wheat,  
I picked up something good to eat,  
Neither fish, flesh, fowl nor bone—  
I kept it till it walked alone.  
(Riddle—An egg.)

*walking on water*

See "folk cures."

*walking papers*

Discharge papers, dismissal notice.

*walking pneumonia*

Virulent pneumonia, much akin to the galloping consumption. See "galloping pneumonia."

*every walk of life*

All classes represented.

*walk out with*

To court, to play suit to.

*walleye*

An eye in which much of the white shows. My father told me to beware always of either a walleyed horse or a walleyed woman.

*wallflower*

A young woman, unpopular as to male company, not asked to dance, etc.

*Walls* have ears.

*walnut, black*

A common nut in the Valley, a hard shell as opposed to the softer-shelled English walnut. Walnut bark and leaves have many good medicinal uses. For instance, a green walnut hull would cure ringworm or skin eruptions, provided the victim could endure the burning pain caused by the juice. This tree grows in rich soils in all parts of the Valley. The leaves are moderately aromatic, bitter and astringent, and the inner bark of the tree and the root are mild cathartics, acting, so it is said, "on the bowels without pain and debilitating the alimentary tract." The Indians in the Valley used the rind of the green fruit in staining and dyeing. The goodies inside the hard shells are highly esteemed. Machinery has been invented now to crack the walnuts and get the goodies out without mashing them.

*wamperjawed*

A one-sided jaw. Same as wapperjawed.

*wampus*

An imaginary creature who lives in the deep Cape Fear River swamps.

*wander*

To rave deliriously. "I sat by his bed all night and from six o'clock on till day he kept wandering."

*wandering dew*

The wandering Jew plant.

*Wandering Dollar*

A game, same as Weave the Thimble.

*to wangle*

To finagle, to arrange to put through a project or accomplish some aim by devious means.

All I *want* in all creation  
Is a pretty little wife and a big plantation.  
All I want to make me happy  
Are two little kids to call me pappy.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

*wants the world*

Greedy. "He wants the world with a fence around it."

*wapperjawed*

Having a crooked or wry jaw. Same as wamperjawed.

There never was a good *war* nor a bad peace.

*War*

A game played by boys. We used to play our wars mainly with maypops, but sometimes when we had an especially rough leader we would play it with rocks. And sometimes too we'd arm ourselves with beanshooters and fight each other by shooting pebbles. See "maypop war."

*wardrobe*

A large upright chest used to keep clothes, usually in the bedroom.

*old war horse*

A worn-out politician or a corny joke or story. Much the same as old chestnut.

*warm*

To spank.

*warm bit*

A sexy woman.

*like death warmed over*

"He's getting better now, but he still looks like death warmed over."

A *warm hand* means a cold heart.

*warming pan*

A lidded brass pan in which hot coals used to be put for the warming of a cold bed.

*warnit*

Walnut.

*warn't*

Was not.

*war paint*

A woman's makeup, rouge, lipstick and so on. "Wait till I put on my war paint and I'll be ready."

He is the greatest *warrior* who conquers himself.

*wartless*

Of good character, honest.

*warts*

A growth on the skin, small and tumor-like and hard. There are dozens and dozens of folk cures for warts as well as explanations of their cause. Handling frogs or getting frog blood on your skin is supposed to cause warts. The best cure I ever found for warts was to prick the wart, get a bit of blood, put it on some grains of corn and throw them to the chickens, and the chickens' eating the corn would cause the warts to disappear. I know this works for I did it several times as a boy, and the warts always went away.

Among the other folk cures, one should take an old piece of cloth, a piece of dishrag is best, prick the wart, get some blood on the cloth, bury the cloth and as it rots away, the warts will disappear. Tobacco juice spat on a wart is a good way to get rid of it. Another cure is to count your warts, make a knot in a thread for every wart, and throw the thread away. As the thread rots, the warts will disappear.

*wash*

Clothes to be laundered. "Tomorrow's Monday, and I'll have to get up my wash tonight."

To stand the test, to prove true. "That fellow's testimony won't wash, I'll tell you that."

A gully.

*washed in the blood*

A belief that through the symbolism of baptism a converted sinner is freed from his sins and is washed in the blood of Christ and is therefore fit for salvation. One of the Valley favorite hymns is "Washed in the Blood."

*washed up*

Undone, finished, a failed talent.

*washing dirty linen in public*

A vulgar discussion of personal matters with others to reveal family or business secrets.



***washout***

A failure, a complete disappointment. Also an eroded place in a road.

***washpot***

The common iron pot usually kept in the backyard of a farmer's house for boiling clothes, for making soap, for heating water, for scalding hogs, and so on, in the old days.

***washstand***

A small bedroom table equipped with a bowl and pitcher, slop jar, chamber pot, hair receiver, soap dish, toothbrush.

***WASP***

White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant.

***waspis, wastis***

Wasps.

***waspish***

Irritable, easy to anger.

***Waste*** makes want.

***Waste*** not, want not.

A ***watched*** pot never boils.

***watching candle***

The candle used at the sitting up with a corpse.

***watch it when you will***

A phrase of emphasis.

***water***

To weaken, dilute. "They say that that old philosophy professor waters his milk."

A pregnant woman shouldn't drink too much ***water*** for fear of drowning her baby.

In the deepest ***water*** are the biggest fish.

like pouring ***water*** on a duck's back

***water brash***

Water on the stomach, a nauseating sickness, pyrosis.

***watercress***

A cress that grows in wet boggy places, even in standing water, and is highly prized as a vegetable and salad in early spring. It is supposed also to be a

good tonic and blood purifier for children.

*water dog*

A second rainbow effect over the first, sometimes a small halo. Also a halo around the sun or moon.

A person who really enjoys swimming and other water activities and is "at home in the water" without fear.

*water down*

To cheapen, to dilute.

*watered stock*

Diluted stock.

*water gall*

Same as a water dog. Another meaning is that of a small cloud formation in the sky which presages rain.

*water gate*

A floodgate.

*water gun*

A folk toy, much the same as pop gun, and used for squirting water at close range in fun.

*water haul*

Pulling up a seine but catching no fish. Also an action with no result. "Our meeting with the legislative committee was a water haul."

*water hemlock*

This plant is sometimes called death of man, or wild parsnip. It grows in all parts of the Valley, in swamps and in wet low-grounds. The plant is acrid and narcotic and the fresh roots are supposed to be especially toxic.

*won't hold water*

Undependable, not bona fide. "His promises won't hold water with me."

*water jack*

A water boy. One who brings water to laboring groups such as convicts working on the highways. There is a very well-known call which I have often heard given forth by some sweaty laborer swinging his pick under the eyes of a guard and crying out, "Water jack, water jack! Coulda been there and halfway back."

*water lily*

A decorative lily now used in many flower garden pools. There are several kinds of water lilies.

*waterloo*

Disaster, ruin, failure, defeat.

*to make water*

To urinate, same as to pass water.

*watermelon*

A favorite southern melon. There is an old saying that if one eats watermelon and ice cream together, the combination will make him sick. I've tried it many times and have never been sick from such eating yet. The Valley housewives especially value the rind for pickle-making.

*"Watermelon on the Vine"*

This song is evidently of minstrel origin, and we workers in the field sang it with good feeling, especially when we had a watermelon waiting for us at the noon hour.

"You can talk about your apples,  
Your peaches and your pears,  
Your 'simmons hanging on the 'simmon tree.  
But bless your heart, my honey,  
That stuff's nowhere a-tall  
It's watermelon that's the special thing for me.

"Hambone is sweet and bacon is good,  
And possum meat is very, very fine,  
But gimme, oh gimme, I surely wish you would,  
That watermelon hanging on the vine."

*watermelon seeds*

These seeds, when dried and eaten, are a stimulant to the urinary tract.

*water mills*

Grist mills using dammed-up waterpower to turn the big mill-rocks for grinding grain. We children used to make little water whirligigs, put them into flooded brooks and delight in watching them turn.

*water moccasin*

A poisonous snake. We boys used to be told that there was no danger from a water moccasin while in the water, because "he can't bite in the water. If he did he would drown." But we were scared of them just the same.

*water over the dam*

A matter of past time or action which cannot now be changed and best be forgot.

*water shelf*

A horizontal board shelf usually nailed to the wall of a farmer's back porch where he conveniently set his bucket and wash basin.

*water-swole*

Water-swollen.

*water under the bridge*

Same as water over the dam.

*on the water wagon*

No longer indulging in alcoholic beverages.

*water witch*

Didapper.

*wattle and dab (daub)*

Close lath work plastered over with clay and chopped straw. Sometimes twigs are used.

*don't make waves*

Don't stir up trouble, let sleeping dogs lie.

*waxberry*

Bayberry.

*wax myrtle*

See "bayberry."

*a-way*

Direction. "Which a-way?" "That a-way."

*any way, shape, form or fashion*

All inclusive.

*in a bad way*

Seriously ill or in harsh financial trouble.

*"Way Down Yonder in the Cornfield"*

An old popular field song. We used to sing it while working.

"Some folks say that a nigger won't steal.  
But I caught two in my cornfield—  
One carried a shovel and the other carried a hoe  
And if that ain't stealin', I don't know.  
Way down yonder in the cornfield."

*"The Wayfaring Stranger"*

An early 19th century hymn, and still popular.

*way gate*

A gate across the road.

*way-out*

Ultramodern, wild. "I like that way-out music."

Hugely pregnant.

Exaggerated.

*a ways*

A long distance. "He lives down the road a ways from here."

*no two ways about it*

No doubt, certain, no argument.

*We* had a pie made out of rye,  
And possum was the meat,  
Rough enough and tough enough  
And more than all could eat.

The raccoon has a ringed tail,  
The possum's tail is bare,  
The rabbit's got no tail at all  
But a little bunch of hair.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

as *weak* as dirt

as *weak* as dishwater

as *weak* as puppy piss

as *weak* as skimmed 'possum piss

as *weak* as water

*weak-kneed*

Unstable, weak-willed.

*weak spot*

A flaw in one's character. "Keep accusing him and you'll find his weak spot somewhere."

*weak trembles*

Palsy, the shakes. "I got so hot I had the weak trembles."

*weaky*

Weak.

He who marries for *wealth* sells his own liberty.

*weaned on a pickle*

A person with a sour expression. Alice Roosevelt Longworth said of President Calvin Coolidge, "He looks as if he had been weaned on a pickle."

*weapon*

The membrum virile.

*wear*

The fashion. "A pompadour is all the wear now."

*wear and tear*

Depreciation due to normal and regular use.

*Wearing* untied shoes brings good luck. "Mr. Archie Johnson told me once he had never tied his shoes after his wedding night."

As your wedding ring *wears*, you'll wear off your cares.

*wear the britches*

Spoken of a woman who bosses her husband around, who plays the man in the household.

*wear the stripes*

To be a member of a chain gang. In the old days all Southern prisoners wore stripes and the more dangerous ones had to wear a ball and chain. But nowadays this is all changed except that the guard still has a gun. The groups of young men working along the road, all dressed in snuff-colored clothes, have the appearance of being pretty much like any other group of young laboring Americans.

Be not *weary* in well-doing.

*wear you out*

To whip harshly, to beat with a switch. "If you don't stop that squalling, I'll wear you out."

*weasel (out)*

Same as arsele out. To go back on one's promise, to fail to keep one's commitment.

*weather*

Usually inclement weather — rain, snow or sleet. "From the looks of the sky we're going to have some weather along about night."

There are hundreds and hundreds of superstitions and folk beliefs relative to the weather, such as the following:

A large halo around the sun or moon suggests fair weather; a small halo foul weather.

When flies are thick and bite fiercely, it is going to rain.

A red sunset means a fair morning.

When swallows come early, a hot summer follows.

A green Christmas means a fat graveyard.

Rain before seven—

Clear before eleven.

*weather breeder*

A humid hot condition of the air, presaging falling weather.

*weave-horse*

A horse that has a meandering or weaving motion as he trots or moves forward.

*Weave the Thimble*

A children's game. A coin or thimble is passed about a circle of players and the central player is to guess who has it. The coin or thimble is held in the palm, then passed about the circle by each player alternately clapping his hands together and then extending his arms so as to touch the hands of his neighbor. For this purpose the right hand should be held downward and the left turned upward as the arms are extended. The coin is to be palmed from hand to hand, and the rhythmical motion is accompanied sometimes by a song, using almost any old tune anyone wishes, which goes somewhat as follows:

Thimble, thimble (dollar, dollar), how you wander,  
From the one hand into the other!

*weaving-house*

A building, separate from the main house, in which the weaving used to take place. This was the custom in the old days.

Oh, what a tangled *web* we weave  
When first we practice to deceive.

It is bad luck to postpone a *wedding*.

*the wedding cake*

There are a number of customs connected with the wedding cake, among them being the belief that if an unmarried girl sleeps on a piece of the wedding cake she will dream about her future husband.

If a bride tears a *wedding dress*, (it's a sign) her husband will beat her.

One *wedge* drives out another.

*weed*

Tobacco, “the weed.”

*weeds*

Clothes.

*Weeds* need no sowing.

The *weeping* bride makes a laughing wife.

*weeping willow*

A very popular tree in the Valley and one, of course, famous in many a ballad and song. The weeping willow usually suggests mourning or sadness.

*weevily*

Full of weevils.

*wee-wee*

To urinate. A child’s word.

*weirdo*

A queer fellow, extreme hippie-type.

as *welcome* as spring

as *welcome* as the flowers in May

as *welcome* as the itch

as *welcome* as the sun after a rain

*You’re welcome.*

A polite reply in answer to a statement of thanks or acknowledgement of some favor.

*welk*

Welt.

as *well* be hanged for a sheep as a lamb

Don’t wait to dig a *well* for water till the house is already afire.

It’s too late to cover the *well* when the child is drowned.

*well and good*

A phrase used for emphasis. “You know well and good I didn’t take your books.”

*Well begun* is half done.

*well bricks*

Specially curved bricks for the lining of wells.



*well digging*

In the earliest Valley days the pioneers built their dwellings near a spring. Then as the population increased and springs were not sufficient to serve, wells were dug. These usually were round holes in the earth and dug on down to the proper water level. Usually fifteen or twenty feet was sufficient depth on the coastal plain to secure plenty of water. Then on up in the Piedmont the depth slightly increased. Our well on our farm in Harnett County went to a depth of some thirty feet. It never went dry and is still serving but now with an electric pump to do the "hauling."

A well-digger in my youth was a man of some special attention, like the horse-and-cow-doctor. Clinton McNeill, a powerful black man, a neighbor of ours, claimed he could dig a well in the stretch of time between sunrise and sunset.

*Well done* is better than well said.

*well-heeled*

Wealthy, plenty of means.

*well-off*

Wealthy.

*well-posted*

Well-informed.

*well sweep*

In the old days when ropes and chains were scarce, water was usually drawn from the household well by a sweep.

A pole some eight or ten feet high would be set up near the well for a fulcrum. Then another pole, the sweep, would be passed through a crotch at the top of the upright pole, and a bolt put through the sweep there. Then some feet farther along the sweep a horizontal pole would be fastened with a bucket hitched to the end of it. The bucket pole would be used to pull the bucket down into the well to fill it. Then hand over hand the bucket pole would be lifted, fetching up the water. The weight of the long end of the sweep would help pull the weighted water bucket up. Sometimes a windlass would be used instead of a well sweep. But both have long passed away. When I was a boy, well sweeps could be seen here and there in the Valley. But I've seen neither sweep nor windlass for more than fifty years.

*well'um*

Well, ma'am. "Well'um, since you axed me, I jest don't know how I does it."

*welsh*

To tattletale, to renege on a promise, to fail to pay one's debts.

*Went* to the river and couldn't get across,  
I jumped on a nigger and thought he was a hoss,  
Nigger bucked and I fell in—  
Ain't gonna try that hoss ag'in.

I went to the river and couldn't get across,  
Paid five dollars for an old gray hoss,  
The hoss wouldn't ride and the hoss couldn't swim  
And I'll never see my five dollars ag'in.  
(An old recitation rhyme.)

*a-went*

Have gone. "They might a-went to church. I don't know."

*We're* all in the dumps  
For diamonds are trumps,  
The kittens are gone to St. Paul's.  
The babies are bit.  
The moon's in a fit.  
And the houses are built without walls.  
(A nursery rhyme.)

*wet*

One who is in favor of liquor as opposed to a dry.

Wrong, mistaken. "He's all wet if he thinks I did it."

*wet* as a drowned rat

*wet behind the ears*

Inexperienced, naive or childlike.

*wet blanket*

A person who is sour-faced and pessimistic, a bringer of bad news.

*wet one's whistle*

Take a dram.

*wet or dry*

A method of choosing up sides in a ball game. In the old days at Pleasant Union one of the leaders would ask the other leader which he chose, wet or dry. Then the first leader would spit on the bat (usually a flat handle-trimmed narrow board) and twirl the bat into the air. When it fell, if the wet side was up, then wet got the first choice of players, and so on.

*whacking*

Very large, bounteous, plentiful. "He made a whacking crop of oats this year."

*Whaddo (Whatta) you know!*

What do you know! Sometimes used as an exclamation of disbelief as well as a query.

*whale*

To flog. "If you don't behave, I'm going to whale the living lard out of you."

A lot, a great deal.

*whall*

A while. "I saw him pass here whall ago like his shirt was a-far."

*whammy*

A police device for catching speedsters.

*whang*

To beat, to hit. "That limb whanged him side the head and knocked him silly."

*whangdoodle*

A foolish thing, a thingamajig. Also the penis.

*I'll tell you what*

A preparatory phrase for emphasis. "I'll tell you what, that woman's got no morals."

*that's what*

Surely, no doubt of it. "George Butts ought to be put in jail for beating Mis' Liz, that's what."

*what all*

All, entirety. "I don't know what all I did with my money." "What all in the world are you doing?"

*What are* little girls made of? (twice)  
Sugar and spice and everything nice,  
And that's what little girls are made of.

*What are* little boys made of? (twice)  
Snaps and snails and puppy dog tails,  
And that's what little boys are made of.  
(A nursery rhyme.)

*What cannot* be cured must be endured.

*whatchamacallit (what-you-may-call-it)*

An item the name of which one cannot recall for the moment, a thingamajig.

*What comes* from the heart goes to the heart.

*Whatever* is worth doing is worth doing well.

*What gives?*

What is happening, what is going on?

*what-have-you*

More of the same, a term of general comment and inclusion. "The people down there are all drunkards, thieves, bullies or what-have-you."

*What in God's name!*

An exclamation.

*What in hell!*

Exclamation.

*What in tarnation!*

Exclamation of some irritability.

*what is*

That is. "A wet kiss is the messiest thing what is."

*What is* a workman without his tools.

*Whatsoever* a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

*What the devil!*

Exclamation.

*what the doctor ordered*

Exactly suitable, what was wanted.

*what the heck, what the Sam Hill*, and so on

Mild exclamations.

*What went with it?*

What happened?

*what's what*

The real lowdown, the actual truth. "Let's go in and find out what's what."

*wheel*

Bicycle. "Leave your wheel outside the door and come on in."

A wagon's worst *wheel* makes the loudest squeal.

*wheelbar'*

Wheelbarrow.

*wheelhorse*

A hard worker, a reliable person.

*wheeze*

A tall tale or a tiresome old saying. "And Minnie had to pull out that old wheeze about a stitch in time saves nine."

*whelp*

A lazy good-for-nothing person, usually refers to a woman.

*When* I die, don't bury me at all.  
Just pickle my bones in alcohol.  
Put a bottle of booze at my head and feet.  
That tells the world I'm resting sweet.

or

Put a bottle of booze to hold in my hand  
And I'll find my way to the promised land.  
(A drinking rhyme.)

*When* I was a baby, a baby, a baby,  
When I was a baby, a baby was I.  
'Twas this way, 'twas that way,  
'Twas this way, 'twas that way,  
When I was a baby, a baby was I.  
(A singing pantomime game.)

This song goes on describing different characters and each with pantomimic action appropriate to the person — a young girl, a gentleman, an old man, a mother, a doctor, and so on and so on.

*When* I was a boy  
I lived by myself  
And all the bread and cheese I got  
I laid it on the shelf.  
The rats and the mice  
They raised such a strife  
That I had to go to London  
To get me a wife.  
The road was so long  
And the streets were so narrow

That I had to bring her home  
In an old wheelbarrow.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

*When* I was a little boy,  
Hardly knee high,  
Mama took a little stick  
And made me cry.

Now I am a big boy  
Mama can't do it,  
But Papa takes a big stick  
And goes right to it.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

*When* the cat's away, the mice will play.

*When* the dew is on the grass,  
Rain will never come to pass.  
(Weather rhyme.)

*whenever*

When. "She hurt herself whenever she fell off the bed this morning."

*When I was a child*, I spake as a child.

*"When I Was Single"*

A popular anti-feminist song. Another of our field-morning songs, a merry one.

"When I was single — oh then, oh then,  
When I was single, oh then,  
When I was single,  
My pockets would jingle,  
And I wish I was single again."

*"When Johnny Comes Marching Home"*

Another popular song of the Civil War times by the talented George F. Root who also wrote "The Battle Cry of Freedom" and "Just Before the Battle, Mother," among other fine songs. I was first introduced to "Johnny" by Roy Harris, the composer, at the MacDowell Colony in 1926. Roy was developing it as an orchestral piece. In illustrating the richness of the material he played it for me on the piano and did so with such fire and power that several of the old piano strings gave way with sharp protesting pings.

*"When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder"*

This is another soul-comforting hymn much loved in the Valley as elsewhere. Words and music were both written by one man, James M. Black

(1856-1938), which makes it something of an exception. It was used always to good effect in the revival meetings. The scaring opening words often served as a text for the preachers at old Pleasant Union Church.

“When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound  
 And time shall be no more,  
 And the morning breaks eternal bright and fair,  
 When the saved on earth shall gather  
 Over on the other shore,  
 And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.”

This was an especial favorite with the Honorable Joseph Carrington, a Valley banker and perennial politician. He often spoke of the reunion with all his loved ones and what a joyous time to be with “the chosen ones” after death. Miss Lucy Adkins, who borrowed money on her teacher's certificate from the Honorable Joseph's bank at the cost of heavy carrying charges, later was heard to say that she doubted he'd be there when the roll was called. “He'd be necessarily detained elsewhere,” she said.

*“When You and I Were Young, Maggie”*

One of the world's most touching songs of love's devotion. The story goes that a young Canadian schoolteacher, George W. Johnson, courted and married pretty Maggie Clark in 1864. Soon after, they moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where he obtained a better teaching job than the one he had held before. Within a year tragedy struck, and Maggie died. Johnson then wrote the poem that expressed his grief, “When You and I Were Young, Maggie,” and published it in a small volume of his verse. James A. Butterfield, a gifted young musician from Chicago, came across the poem and set it to music. Of the some 150 songs Butterfield composed, this is the only one that has lived.

“I wandered today to the hill, Maggie,  
 To watch the scene below,  
 The creek and the creaking old mill, Maggie,  
 As we used to long ago.  
 The green grove is gone from the hill, Maggie,  
 Where first the daisies sprung,  
 The creaking old mill is still, Maggie,  
 Since you and I were young.”

*When you are married* and eating fish,  
 Don't get greedy and swallow the dish.  
 When you are married and living by the sea,  
 Step to the mirror and kiss yourself for me.  
 (A recitation rhyme.)

*“Where Is My Wandering Boy Tonight?”*

This tearful offering appeared in 1877, words and music by the Reverend R. Lowry. For more than a hundred years it has been a useful revival-meeting piece to aid in bringing prodigal Valley sons back into the fold and to a mother's tender care. Sometimes it helped, sometimes not. In the case of my boyhood friend, call him Sam Maxton, it failed. For all the singing and praying, he went his violent way at last to fill a suicide's grave.

“Where is my wandering boy tonight—  
The boy of my tenderest care,  
The boy that was once my joy and light,  
The child of my love and prayer.  
My heart overflows  
For I love him he knows,  
O where is my boy tonight?”

*wherewithal*

Means, the money. “I would like to go to the fair but I ain't got the wherewithal.”

*Where You Are*

A children's game. The full title of this game is “Where you are, Who you're with, What you're doing.” One player goes around and whispers to each member of the group where he is. Another tells him quietly whom he is with, and then a third tells each player what he is doing. Then the leader asks each person the three questions, and the juxtaposition of people and situations in the answers is often hilarious, especially if those assigning where, with whom and what the player is doing are highly imaginative.

*whē'r (whether)*

“I don't know whē'r he's living or not.”

*Where* there is marriage without love there will usually be love without marriage.

*whetrock*

A whetstone. In the old days there was a common belief that the best way to get a whetstone was to take a smooth tough piece of green hickory, put it in running water in a stream and let it stay there a year. It would turn into a rock and would be the best kind of stone for sharpening axes, scythes and other tools. Another first-rate kind of whetstone was supposed to be a petrified rock. See “hickory whetrock.”

*which-a-way*

Which way? Also topsy-turvy.



*the which*

"He said the madstone would cure that dog bite, the which it did."

*whiddle*

Whittle.

Wheedle.

*whiff*

To throw with great speed. "Old Lefty Grove just whiffed that third strike by the batters."

*whiffer*

A tattletale.

*whig (wig)*

A sour Scotch drink made from sour whey. It was usually pronounced in the Valley in the old days without the "h" as wig, and the common comparison we had was in reference to something sour, "as sour as wig."

*whimsy-whamsy*

All crazy, awry.

*whim-whams*

The hysterics, the heebee-jeebies.

*whings*

Wings.

As a boy I often heard the word "wings" pronounced "whings." But like "jist" for joist, "chice" for choice, such pronunciation has passed out of fashion.

"Whings" brings to mind the old man, Acharel Matthews, who so used the word and took it on himself to obey a command he said he received from the Lord relative thereto. To my young bravado inquiry as to this, he once said to me, "Yessiree, the Lord came to me in a vision in the night plain as the pa'm of my hand and said to me, 'Son, Acharel,' he said, 'I want you to prove your faith to me and to others, helping to bring them to repentance. I want you to fly.' The Master didn't tell me just how to work it but just to fly. I wiv-wavered about it and he spoke to me again in the deep of the night. 'I want you to fly.' Well, I determined to obey the Lord. I talked to my boys and they was against it. But I kept right on, determined to have my way, that's the Lord's way. Well, to make a long story short, me and the Lord finally prevailed and me and the boys made some wide, thin-boarded whings with strops to 'em. I put 'em on and climbed a ladder up on the barn roof. Several people, including Preacher Rolland, had assembled to see me and the Lord prevail. So I balanced myself on the comb-

edge of the roof and said a little prayer of trust in the Lord and sailed off. Later I realized what had happened. I was the source of my own downfall. For at the very identical instance I plunged off into the air the thought struck me — jist suppose this thing don't work. That's what done the damage. Right at the spang second I needed faith to make me sail off in the air on my whings like a bird this doubt struck me. It was the devil done it. Ah, Lord, he's sly and always laying in wait. He put the thought into my mind."

Old Acharel landed in the hog pen, and several of his greedy fattening hogs attacked him, thinking maybe he was a shock of corn falling as feed for them. The sons and the neighbors saved him from the hogs, but for the rest of his life he walked somewhat sideways because of the injury to his spine. The boys burnt the "whings" in the trash pile and, though the "whings" are long gone, the story is still alive in the Valley.

*whip*

The leader, the foreman. "That big fellow was the whip for the whole logging crew."

*whip around*

To change directions. "The wind whipped around to the North and it turned cold as fury."

*whipped down*

To be tired out, exhausted.

*whippersnapper*

An insignificant person.

*whipping boy*

One who suffers for the wrongdoings of another.

*whippoorwill*

A famous night bird. The whippoorwill is often associated with sad omens, sickness or death.

One of the old folk beliefs was that when you hear the first whippoorwill you can kill off any bad luck if you get down on the ground and roll over three times. After this the evil bird cannot hurt you. But also there is a brighter side to the whippoorwill's coming because when its first notes are heard, winter and all cold weather are gone.

*whippoorwill peas*

A variety of peas speckled like whippoorwill eggs.

*whippoorwill shoes*

Lady's-slipper flower.

*whip steel*

To use a sledge hammer in driving a steel drill down. "Lawd, that man could whip steel all day and never complain."

*whipstitch*

Instant. "He was up from there in a whipstitch."

*whirligig*

A little play waterwheel.

*whirlwind*

An overly energetic person.

A whirlwind means dry weather. In the early days in the Valley the old Scots used to refer to a whirlwind as a "furl o' fairies wind."

*by a whisker*

Within an ace of, a close shave, a narrow escape.

*Whiskey* drinking is risky drinking.

Drinking a lot of *whiskey* will cure a snakebite.

*whist*

A card game, also a command to silence. "Whist on your tongue, will you."

*whistle*

Throat. "I'll wet my whistle with some of this Adam's ale and then I'll be able to talk better."

*Whistle* in the dark to give you courage.

It is bad luck to *whistle* in a boat for it's likely to raise a wind.

*whistle britches*

Corduroy pants which make a scrubbing noise as the legs rub together.

*whistling in the dark*

A wasted effort, an ineffectual act.

A *whistling* woman and a crowing hen  
Are sure to come to no good end.

*whit*

A bit, a tiny amount. "I don't care a whit whether she gets married or don't."

*white*

The color white is a symbol of death. The white dove, the white heron, the white horse, the white swan are connected with death, with the cemetery and the warnings of doom.

As a boy I heard it told that when old Miss Rebecca Lloyd was lying on her deathbed a snow-white dove came and perched on the comb of the house just over her. And on the day the old woman's breath took its final flight the dove flew straight up into the sky and kept on flying and finally disappeared in the light of the blazing sun. Old Miss Minty Gaskins declared that this dove was carrying Miss Becky's immortal soul to heaven just the way the bird in the Scriptures once toted a leaf in its mouth. See "bird omen."

Also honest, fair, reliable. "Oh, he'll treat you white all right."

as *white* as a ghost

as *white* as a sheet

as *white* as chalk

as *white* as cotton

as *white* as snow

*white alder (pepper bush)*

This species grows in swamps and damp places from Maine to Florida and throughout North Carolina. Tea made from it was once a good medicine for fevers, coughs and lung afflictions.

*white birch*

Not native to the Valley but becoming popular as an ornamental tree.

*white-bowl-of-milk*

The call of the whippoorwill.

*White chickens* lay more eggs than brown or black chickens.

*white-collar worker*

One who works with his brains rather than his hands.

*white elephant*

A worthless holding, especially as to a sizeable building or project. "He spent a lot of money on that old hotel and it's nothing but a white elephant."

*white feather*

Cowardice.

When *white folks* build 'em a fire, the nigger can keep warm toting wood.

Got one mind for *white folks* to see,

Another mind for what I know is me.

A *white glove* often conceals a dirty hand.

Suffering and grieving produce *white hair* early.

*white-haired boy*

The pet, the hopeful one.

*white horse*

Death. "Some of these days, and it won't be long, the figure on the white horse is going to stop at my door." There used to be a common belief that death rode a white horse and could be seen now and then making his way to a doomed person's house.

To dream of three *white horses* presages death.

*white lightning*

Raw moonshine, corn liquor.

*white-livered*

Cowardly.

*white moth*

The millermoth, also associated with death.

I remember hearing Reverend Wicker tell a horrifying story to us children one night when he was staying at our house. He told about how he had to sit up with a sick man who was a dreadful sinner, and during the night this man died unrepentant without having his soul saved. And there he lay on the bed with his mouth open. And Mr. Wicker said he looked at him and saw a white moth come out of his mouth and fly away. "And that was his soul, children, that white moth. And you know where that thing was bound? It was bound for hellfire there to burn forever and ever."

Don't kill a *white moth* — it might be somebody's soul.

*white mulberry*

Sometimes called the silkworm tree. This tree is a native of China and has been naturalized in the Valley. Back in the old, old days it was thought that silk worms could be raised and fed on the leaves of these trees and the manufacture of silk would result. But just as up in Virginia, the experiment failed. The root of the tree is astringent, and a tea made from its bark is supposed to be good for diarrhea.

*white oak*

Perhaps the most beautiful of all trees in the Valley. For a long while it has been the main source of cross ties for the railroads, in shipbuilding, flooring, framing, and a multitude of other uses. The acorns have been good for fattening hogs and the bark is astringent, used in tanning and for all sorts of medicinal uses, gargles and injections. White oak strips were much used for making baskets and chair bottoms especially.

*white of an egg*

Drop the white of an egg in a glass of water and it will form a picture of your love's calling. If he is a sailor, the shape formed will look like a ship; if he is a farmer, it will look like a plow or hoe maybe, and so on. Old Aunt Dicey Ragland, who has never married, said to romantic Effie Latham one day, "Law, ma'am, you better not be a-doing of that. I tried it onct and it made me the shape of a coffin and what happened? Why my sweetheart Bent Morphis was blowed up by dynamite blasting the next day and they didn't find enough of him to bury. Yes ma'am, if you're not to get married before you die, that egg business will sure make you a coffin. Stay away from it, yes ma'am. Like you, maybe, I still got hopings too, but I sure don't mess with them whites of eggs in glasses of water anymore and *you* better not. 'Cause as long as we don't know the worst we can still expect the best. Ain't it the truth!"

*"Whiter Than Snow"*

Another popular Valley hymn. Here once again is stated the intense faith that the miracle of salvation is to take place through the blood of Jesus.

"Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole,  
I want thee forever to live in my soul.  
Break down every idol, cast out every foe.  
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow—

"Whiter than snow, whiter than snow,  
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

The words are by James Nicolson and the tune by William G. Fischer.

*white sand*

A good cure for stomach ulcers, or so Uncle Bob Green was told. He had a bad ulcer and an old man told him that if he would take one teaspoonful of white sand every day he would get cured. Well, believe it or not, Uncle Bob tried it and he was cured. It's a wonder it didn't kill him.

*white swelling*

The folk term for the once dreadful disease osteomyelitis. This curse used to be more prevalent in the Valley than it is now. Better diet, sanitation, more medical knowledge and more available hospitals have tended to diminish it.

As a little boy I suffered with it for two terrible years. I first fell out of an apple tree and hurt my arm, and then the disease took over. Many a night I would lie in front of the fire on a pallet with my aching arm and knee toward the soothing heat, and every hour or two my mother would rise and put on replenishing logs. Doctor Joe McKay treated me with every

kind of purgative known to man, including calomel, black draught and castor oil. He even painted my whole arm with iodine.

Every passing neighbor prescribed too. "I'll tell you what, Billy," one would say to my father, "get you some red oak bark, bile it good and mix the tea with meal and make a good poultice, then wrop that boy's arm in it, and it'll do the trick." Another would say, "His kidneys are poisoning him. Feed him some of this good swamp root and he'll mend right away." Swamp root was one of the hundreds of patent medicines for which the hardworking people in the Valley paid out their good money to the scavengers of the North. Finally Doctor Joe lost patience with me and one day in his little office there in Buie's Creek where I had gone for treatment, he had his Negro man grab me and hold me. "Look out yonder and see that crow, Paul," he said. I looked off, and pang! he had split my elbow open with his lancet. Then as the Negro continued to hold my churning form, the doctor progued in my inner forearm with a huge sucking needle. I still bear the scars and I still hear in my inner ear the awful screams I let out.

"Billy," he said later to my father, "you better take him up to Johns Hopkins in Baltimore to Dr. Osler and let him cut his arm off. He's going to die if you don't and that soon." Somehow my father and mother scraped up \$75 and Father took me to Baltimore and just in time for, although I was ten years old, I weighed only forty pounds. The wonderful doctors at the hospital saved both me and my arm.

Poor old Aunt Margaret Messer, Little Bethel Church's holy woman, opposed my going to the last. "Prayer is the only thing that will save him, prayer and Dr. Yokum's sanctified handkerchiefs putt on the pizen place," she said. I am glad my parents wouldn't listen to her.

So I have some definite opinions on the subject of white swelling. So has my old friend Mr. Mac, the miller. One day when I was down at his mill chewing the rag with him on various matters, folklorish, historical and sundry, Ashe Brodie, the bootlegger, came in with a half-bushel of corn to be ground. He was wiv-wavering with drunkenness, and Mr. Mac fell afoul of him for his ways and especially for having his sick son down to the Holy Roller camp meeting at Falcon to be prayed over and healed of his bone disease by the sanctified people.

"Why in the world, Ashe," the old miller fumed. "don't you take that boy up to Rex Hospital and get him operated on for that leg that's rotting off?" But the slobbering hypocrite whined and said he was ashamed of Mr. Mac for not putting his trust more in the power of "our almighty and blessed Lord." Ashe himself was almost a nervous wreck from hiding in the swamps and jumping from every wind-moving bush, thinking it was a revenue officer. And while the old miller had him there hemmed up in the millhouse he worked a bit on his sorry superstitious soul — for that crippled boy's sake.

"Ashe," he said, "you better be careful how you mix your medicine

and your Lord. They're like oil and water. You ain't old enough, but I remember the case of Tatum Baker, the liquor-head. He woke up one morning with his back bent like a jackknife. Some said a spell had been put on him, others that he slept without a sheet and had caught the cramps. Anyhow, he went for months like that. He tried all kinds of quack doctors, plasters, pills and even took a case or two of female disorder medicine, but nothing seemed to help him. Finally he gave in to his wife's pleading and went down to the Holiness meeting at Falcon to be prayed over.

"And the sisters and brothers prayed all right — for a night and the whole of next day they did. About sundown of the second day, the misery left Tatum, and he straightened up and went to shouting. Not only that, but he happy-danced off a piece up and down the aisle and let loose a great bellowing of unknown tongues. Yessir, he was healed and healed good. He thought he was. But old Moster was only playing with him. Later that night going home he felt so fine he couldn't be contained. He had to celebrate. He stopped there in Dunn and got himself a quart of liquor and drank it all as he walked on home. This time wouldn't count, he said, just the way all you liquor-heads say, and before long he was addled and drunk as he wobbled ahead.

"It was a hot night and a big thundercloud had come up. As he wandered up the lane at the Shovel place, a real cloudburst fell out of the sky. Now it happened that old Andrew Shovel himself was lying dead in his house. Some neighbors were there sitting up, and in front of his yard was a hearse with its two black-plumed horses tied to a tree. Tatum hurried along as fast as he could, and as he got near, in his disordered state of mind he mistook the hearse for some sort of covered carriage. Since it was pouring such a heavy rain and thundering and lightning so, he opened the door and crawled in to keep dry.

"Now as everybody knows, a hearse don't have any handles on the inside, for the corpse has no need to open the door from within. Well, all of a sudden and blam! the lightning struck a tree in old Shovel's yard. The horses bucked and charged and broke loose, and away they went with hearse, Tatum and all. Lickety-split they went right down the lane back toward Dunn where they came from. As they went charging along, the hearse leaning and blundering from side to side, Tatum's mind cleared up somewhat and he realized where he was. And then he set up a terrible yelling and screeching and praying to the Lord God Almighty — sort of the way you must have done the other day, Ashe, when you were trying to get saved at the mourners' bench — yeh, no doubt just the way you did.

"Other neighbors heard the hearse coming, and they rushed out on their porches as it went by. And in the flashes of lightning they could see the 'dead man' in there, squatted on his knees, throwing up his hands and bowing and praying. And they fled back inside and barred their doors.



Finally the horses ran smack into the main avenue of Dunn, and there by the street lights the inhabitants visioned this strange flying contraption. And more than one of them bolted out of the house and took to the alleys and side streets and even fields. Right on through the town the horses ran. As they swerved around the curve going toward Clinton, the hearse turned over and threw Tatum out through the broken glass and hard against a ditch stump. This time he really was hurt. His back was cracked.

“From that day forth he walked exactly as he walked before — bent all over — and neither doctors nor preachers could ever heal him. They said he learned his lesson all right, but he learned it too late. For before long he died, a lost soul from hardening of the liver and in great pain. No sir, it won’t do to mix your medicine and your religion.

“Now sit still, Ashe, for that ain’t all, and you know where there’s no hope there’s no hurry and many a man feeds his brains to his belly. Take the case of another bootlegger like you — bootlegger, you heard me, Ashe — old man Abner Witherspoon, who had denied his children both their chance at health and schooling, all for the sake of the liquor he loved. He once got down mighty low with locked bowels, and he promised the good God if he would let him up again he would serve him all the days of his life, would take care of his wife and children, never make whiskey again, never curse, and never have evil thoughts rambling in his brain. So God let him up, and he walked about. But it weren’t any time at all till he was back at that whiskey still, firing and straining and a-cussing and thinking of every Saturday night when he’d get off down to Dunn and cut up with some hot wild women. You know how it was, Ashe, for you do that yourself. So God Almighty struck him down again and brought him right up to the hinge creak of the gate of death. And such a loud clamoring and pow-wow of praying and begging the country had never heard before. Sort of like the pow-wowing and hollering you did the other day, Ashe, from what they tell me. Maybe it was because of these children and his wife, Melinda, a godly woman all the years of her being, that the Big Boss in the sky finally heard him again and restored him to health.

“What did he do then? He did what so many of us are prone to do — and what you have done time and again, Ashe — the minute the threat of danger faded far away, he went back to his vomit. But as the hog said when the devil sheared him, once is a lot, two times is too much, and three times is completely and tee-totalling overdoing it. So for old Abner there never was a third chance. For when he started back consorting with Old Scratch — and you know every time a man falls he falls harder than before and mires up that much deeper in the slough of his undoing — well, the ha’nts got him this time. Yessir, and I mean ha’nts. You can call it delirium tremens, the happy weepings or the jerks or the pentecostal pourings, but anyhow old Abner was a pitiful sight to see. You know how it is, Ashe, when you

begin to see faces in knotholes and hear voices in your head and little fingers begin tickling behind your ears, and a great creature you can't even see begins to walk behind you with heavy feet, and you hear him going bump, bump, all in time to your beating heart.

"One day the Iron-faced Man would be after Abner. Then another day Rawhead-and-bloody-bones would run him around the house. Then at night likely as not the little Headless Girl would get under his bed and snigger at him with gurgling sounds coming from the slit place in her throat. Be still, Ashe, I ain't finished.

"Then there was the ghost of old Aunt Mahaly, the witch woman, with her bucket of snakes that would get after him. She would set upon him in his delirium, coming up out of the deep Cape Fear swamps to do it, with Jack-muh-lantern coming ahead of her with a ball of fox-fire in his hand to light her way. And she would bring her witch's pot and put it right in the middle of the floor and start her fire burning around her devil's brew, and the snakes crawling out of the bucket would get busy bringing chips in their mouths to feed the fire. He thought they did — he was so far gone.

"And it was right there that the wonder-working ways of nature's God took his final reckoning with Abner. For one night when the thunder and lightning were popping and cracking in the trees around the house, the ha'nt of old Mahaly started her hocus-pocus by his bed, snakes and all. Some of the neighbors were sitting up with him that night and trying to hold him down. The next day Finley Broom was coming to haul him away to the asylum. But when morning broke coolish and fair with the world all fresh and clean again, there was no need of Finley's straightjacket and his buggy. For during the night old Abner had got loose from his neighbors and jumped spang in the middle of Aunt Mahaly's cauldron and was scalded to death. Yessir, Ashe, it's not what actually is in the world that makes so much to-do with man, but what he thinks is in the world. Scalded to death, you heard me.

"From the squallings and babble of words that had kept breaking from old Abner's lips as he died, the watchers knew he thought it was boiling water into which he leapt. Anyhow more than one swore that when they picked him up from the floor dead as a nit he had blisters on his hands and face same as if actual scalding water had been poured on him. Take it or leave it, that's what they said. Heigh, wait a minute, Ashe, don't rush off like that. I'm just getting to the point."

But Ashe was gone out of the millhouse as if the dogs were after him, and he raised a dust fleeing down the road. Mr. Mac must have scared him some, for he did do right by his crippled boy the next day — sent him to a surgeon at Rex Hospital and had him finally cured of his white swelling. But for Ashe there seems to be no cure. He is back again making liquor in the swamp and drinking plentifully of it, and trembling and moaning with nervousness every time a pine cone falls.

***whitewash***

To clear or to prove innocent.

***whitewashing the hearth***

The fireplace and hearth were not used during the summer, and it was the custom in the Valley to make them more presentable than just to stand there dark and waiting for the winter fires. Usually the fireplace was brushed out and maybe some clumps of shrubbery placed in it. Then the custom was to "whitewash" or "clay" the rock faces and the hearth.

This was a strict requirement at our house. I can still hear my mother say, "Warm weather's here now and it's time to clay the hearth." The claying took place several times during the summer. About a mile from home was the "Cofield place," with a bank of whitish clay.

We children would take a bucket and trowel or small shovel and get clay from this bank. It was mixed with water and a gooey mush made of it. Then with sopping wet rags the hearth and fireplace faces would be thickly smeared with it. When dried, it all looked nice and white. And woe to any slovenly tobacco chewer who happened to stain that whiteness with his spitting.

***whitleather***

The toughest kind of leather. I was told as a boy it was leather from the neck hide of steers, made tough by the yoke-wearing. A common saying is, "as tough as whitleather."

***whiz***

A most capable person. "She's a whiz at cooking."

***who-all***

Who.

***Whoa, Maud!***

A warning to be careful, to stop.

***Who do you think you are!***

A reprimand.

"*Who* killed Cock Robin?"

"I," said the sparrow,

"With my bow and arrow

I killed Cock Robin."

"Who saw him die?"

"I," said the fly,

"With my little eye

I saw him die."

(A nursery rhyme.)

*since who laid the rail*

A long while. "I been knowing that fellow since who laid the rail."

*whole hog or nothing*

Completely, entirely, or not at all.

*whole shebang*

The collected whole, the entire crowd.

*the whole shooting match*

The entire group or collection of items.

*whole soul and body*

Completely, entirely. See "Big John."

*whoop and a holler*

A measurement of distance. "He lives only a whoop and a holler away."

*whooping-socker*

A big shot of alcohol, a large drink of liquor.

*whoosh*

To go by in a hurry.

*whop*

To hit or throw an opponent down suddenly as in wrestling.

*whop down*

To sit. "Whop yourself down there and rest a while."

*a whopper*

A big lie or tall tale. "That boy told me a whopper and so I whupped him."  
Also anything huge.

*whore-hopper*

An habitue of a bawdy house, a chaser after loose women.

*Whose* bread I eat, his song I sing.

*Whosoever* will, let him take the water of life freely.

Oh, *who will shoe* your purty little foot,  
And who will glove your hand,  
Oh, who will kiss your sweet rosy cheek  
When I'm in that furrin land?

Oh, Poppa will shoe my purty little foot  
And Momma will glove my hand.  
And you shall kiss my sweet rosy cheek  
When you come from that furrin land.

(Folk lyric.)

*whup*

Whip.

*whupped*

Whipped. Also tired-out, exhausted.

*no why or wherefore*

Without question, certainly, absolute.

There's never a *why* but there's a wherefore.

*Why* is a dog's tail like the heart of a tree?

(Riddle—It's farthest from the bark.)

*wibble-wobble*

Unsteady.

*wick*

Self-pride. "He's got too much wick for his candle."

as *wide* as a barn door

as *wide* as the ocean

*widow man*

A widower.

*widow's peak*

A hairline with a peak downward on the forehead of a woman.

*widow's weeds*

Mourning dress.

*widow woman*

A widow.

A good *wife* and health

Are a man's best wealth.

If I had a *wife* and she would get drunk,

I tell you just what I would do.

I'd build me a boat and set her afloat

And paddle my own canoe.

(Proverb rhyme.)

Me and my *wife* and a bob-tailed dog

Tried to cross the creek on a rotten log—

The log did break and we fell in

So I lost my bottle of gin.

Ha-ha-ha, you and me,  
Little brown jug,  
How I love thee.  
(A recitation rhyme.)

*wiggle-tail*

An active larva, as mosquito larvae.

*Wiggle-waggle* through the grass,  
Big head and no ass.  
What is it? (Riddle—A snake.)

as *wild* as a buck

as *wild* as a colt

as *wild* as a ha'nt

as *wild* as the ocean

*the wild blue yonder*

The sky, also foolish and outlandish plans and dreams.

*wild carrot*

See "Queen Anne's lace."

*wildcat*

A furious frenzied woman.

*wild cherry*

Next to the pine, the wild cherry is perhaps the most valuable of all medicinal plants and trees in the Valley. Tea and syrup made from it are good for the nerves, good for fever, scrofula, consumption, bad heart and whatnot. I remember my mother used to send us children out to get bark off the wild cherry tree which she would boil, mix with syrup and give to us for a tonic. I, too, have given it to some of my children and with no bad results.

*wildfire*

Erysipelas. Also a fire, as a forest fire, running wild.

*wild ginger*

See "heartleaf."

A *wild goose* never laid a tame egg.

*wild goose chase*

A fool's errand, such as an April Fools' Day joke of sending a gullible person for a left-handed monkey wrench. Also an effort that produces no results. "When I heard they were paying more for leaf tobacco in Raleigh, I took

mine there — but it was a wild goose chase.”

*wild indigo (horsefly killer, fly killer)*

This plant is found in fertile soils from Virginia to Florida, and is usually two to four feet high. We used to fasten sprigs of it in the mules' bridles to keep the flies away. It had its medicinal uses too in the old days. One ounce of boiled root to one pint of hot water made a good tonic. Dose — one teaspoonful every three or four hours.

*wild iris*

A beautiful small iris that grows in damp places and even in wet swamps. The root is chewed or eaten for numerous complaints, dropsy, spleen and kidney afflictions and as a good purgative.

*wild oats*

Youthful indiscretions, mostly of a sexual nature.

Don't sow your *wild oats* in a briar patch.

*wild onion*

A common pest throughout the Valley. The juice or syrup from its bulbs has been used for colic in infants.

*wild pigeons (passenger pigeons)*

These were once the most abundant pigeons in the United States but are now extinct. The species had a handsome red breast and a somewhat long tapering tail and traveled in huge flocks, often large enough to darken the whole sky. When I was a boy, I would hear now and then from some older person stories about “them wild pigeons.” Uncle Bayliss Purefoy said to me one day while we sat on the bank of Morgan's Creek waiting for the fish to bite that he'd seen and heard many quare and wonderful things in his life but nothing ever to equal “them pigeons.”

He went on, “Sometimes you'd hear a roaring way-off yonder like the rush of a train and then here they'd come, a flood of 'em, maybe a flock a mile across. Louder and louder the roaring would sound as they passed along overhead. And the earth would grow dark, most like the 'clipse had come. Onct — and you got to believe me — we measured the time, and it took a flock a whole hour to pass over. Sometimes they'd light down to roost in a neighborhood and all through the woods you could hear the limbs of the pine trees popping and breaking from the weight of 'em. And tame! — you could walk right up to one setting on a low limb and kill him with a stick. We killed mergins of 'em an' et pigeon meat till the thought of that meat made you heave. But that's gone — all long gone. They say they ain't a single one of them birds left in the entire world.”

*wild potato vine*

Another curse to the farmer. It grows prolifically in very poor soil and its roots go down beyond the reach of a plow. Its tubers were once used by the Valley Indians for food.

*wild sarsaparilla*

An aromatic plant, the root of which is a gentle stimulant.

*wild strawberry*

A smaller strawberry than the garden variety but an exquisite fruit for jam and also a good remedy, so it is said, for gout.

*wild tobacco*

The wild lobelia, puke weed, or vomitwort.

Where there's a *will* there's a way.

“*Will* you walk into my parlor?”

Said the spider to the fly.

“It's the prettiest parlor  
that ever you did spy.”

“Not I,” said the fly.  
(Nursery rhyme.)

*Wilful waste* makes woeful want.

*William Trimbletoe*

A counting rhyme. The players sit in a circle at a table or on the floor, and each player places one or two fingers before him. The leader counts out as follows:

“William Trimbletoe, he's a good fisherman,  
Catches hens, puts them in pens,  
Some lay eggs, some don't—  
Wire, briar, limberlock,  
Sit and sing till twelve o'clock.  
The clock fell down, the mouse ran around,  
O-u-t spells out.  
On your way home.”

Then the one who is “It” leaves the room, and the other players choose names for themselves, such as mule, donkey, horse, bear and so on, assigning a name to “It” also in his absence. Then the leader calls “It” to return and asks him which he'd rather come home on, a mule, a horse, and so on, calling the names that have been given. If “It” chooses his own name, he must walk home. If not, the one he chooses goes and gets him and brings him



in on his back. Then the leader says, "What have you got there?" and "It" replies, "A bag of nits." Then the leader says, "Shake him till he spits." And the carrier shakes his rider terrifically to the gales of laughter. Then the game begins again.

*willies*

Hysterics, nervousness, hicumstrikes. "That fellow gives me the willies just to look at him."

A *willing* helper does not wait until he is asked.

*willing tit*

A loose girl or woman.

*"Willie, the Weeper"*

Another of our favorite misery songs, cf. "Cocaine Lil," "The Graveyard Song," and "St. James' Infirmary."

"Did you ever hear the story 'bout Willie, the Weeper?  
Made his living as a chimney sweeper.  
He had the dope habit and he had it bad,  
Listen while I tell you 'bout the dream he had—  
Teet ta teeta dee dee, toota toota doo doo,  
Yah dee dah dah dee dee dah dee dah dah."

The song goes on to tell how Willie went to the dope house on Saturday night, smoked a "dozen pills or mo' " and then took off on a "trip." He was riding high till "Bim bam boo!—and the dope give out."

*willy-nilly*

Indecisive, will I — nill I, yes-or-no manner, unimportant either way.

*wind*

Nonsense, empty talk.

Stamina, endurance. "Since I quit cigarettes, my wind is twice as strong."

*Wind* and tide wait for no man.

*Wind* from the east means stormy weather.

Sow the *wind* and reap the whirlwind.

When the *wind* is in the east,  
'Tis neither good for man nor beast.  
When the wind is in the north,  
The fisherman he goes not forth.  
When the wind is in the south,  
It blows the bait in the fish's mouth.

When the wind is in the west,  
Then 'tis at the very best.  
(Weather rhyme.)

It's an ill *wind* that blows no good.

*wind-broken*

Bellowsed, diseased in the respiratory system.

*wind-busted*

Same as wind-broken.

*windfall*

Any piece of unexpected good luck or fortune.

*windfalls*

Berries or fruits or nuts fallen from the trees due to the wind.

*windflower*

The anemone.

*winding blades*

The four arms or blades on which a skein of cotton or yarn is put to be wound into balls. "He came at me with his arms flying like winding blades."

*winding sheet*

A sheet that covers a corpse.

*windjamming*

Voluble and silly talk, over-loquaciousness.

*windmilling*

Said of a catapulting horse, one which is somersaulting.

*out the window*

Lost completely, disappeared. "With all those doctor bills my savings have gone out the window."

*window shopping*

Eye shopping, gazing at goods in windows without buying.

*wind shakes*

Cracked fibers in trees caused by the wind.

*windsucker*

A bellowsed horse.

*wind-swallowers*

People who without knowing it swallow a lot of wind. Our family doctor tells me that many stomach pains result from this. They usually tend to

“break wind” a great deal, too.

*windup*

The end, the conclusion. Also the motion of a baseball pitcher preparing to throw the ball.

*windy*

Prone to exaggeration.

as *windy* as March

Sharp horns on the moon mean *windy* weather.

*Wine* is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

Look not upon the *wine* when it is red.

*wing*

The arm. “His old wing is hurting him and he can’t pitch worth a cent.”

*winkers*

Eyes.

*in three winks*

Quickly, almost instantly.

*wintergreen*

The pipsissewa plant.

Malinda Chapin’s children had tapeworm for years, and they were so filthy that you could smell them almost before you could see them. The welfare lady in town kept sending them to the hospital where they’d be treated for a while and then they’d come home no better than when they left. Finally, Cicero West, the herb doctor, made up a lot of tea from the wintergreen or pipsissewa plant and fed it to them by the quart. They recovered from their tapeworm all right, but he never did get them so they didn’t stink.

*wintersweet*

The sweet marjoram.

*wipe out*

To kill, to murder, to rub out, to forgive and forget.

*wipe the floor with*

A severe thrashing or mauling. “Such a beating I’ve never seen — he wiped up the floor with him.”

*wipe the slate clean*

To make a new beginning, a new resolve, to forget old differences.

*wire grass*

Bermuda grass. A farmer's tough pest once it gets started but fine for healing up eroded places in land.

*wire pulling*

Finagling, swapping and trading to get one's way.

*wire road*

A road with telegraph or telephone wires along it.

*Old Wire Road*

The road that used to run along the Cape Fear from Fayetteville to Raleigh. Many historic incidents have happened on this road and many historic characters traveled it, among them old peg-leg Santa Anna when he was being taken to Washington as a prisoner.

*Wisdom* is the sunlight of the soul.

*wisdom tooth*

A tooth that comes late and is supposed to come at the time when a person is old enough to have some wisdom.

A *wise* man gets learning from those that have none.

A *wise* son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

Be ye *wise* as serpents and harmless as doves.

It's a *wise* child that knows his own father.

Be not *wise* in your own conceit.

*(Naomi) Wise*

A celebrated tragic young woman in North Carolina history and folklore who was drowned in Deep River by her lover, Jonathan Lewis. A ballad was written and sung for many years about the tragedy. I've heard there are even more stanzas. Our quartet used to sing it. See " 'Omi Wise."

If you *wish* something done well, do it yourself.

*wishbone*

The forked bone in the breast of most birds, especially chickens.

There used to be an old custom when one got the wishbone at the table. After it was cleaned off, the person having it would offer to pull the bone apart with some other person. The one who got the longer piece was the lucky one and would get his wish. And it was believed that if this piece was put above the door, then the first one of the opposite sex who entered the door would be the future husband or wife.

She didn't have no *wishbone*  
Where her backbone ought to be.

*wishbook*

A mail-order house catalogue, especially Sears and Roebuck catalogue.

*Wishes* never fill the bag.

*Wishes* won't wash dishes.

If *wishes* were horses, beggars would ride.

*wishy-washy*

Undecided, weak of will, easily persuaded.

*witch*

A witch is a woman, usually an elderly one, endowed with supernatural powers, powers of an evil and harmful nature. There are innumerable stories of witches and innumerable tokens and fetishes and protections against them. Perhaps of all folklore creatures the witch is the most popular and active. Sometimes the witch is called a hag and possesses the same sort of evil powers. Silver is supposed to be the best protection against one of these creatures. See "protection against witches" and "silver bullet."

*witch doctor*

A hocus-pocus root doctor character who is supposed to be able to unwitch a person or provide cures or protections against all evil powers.

*witches' stirrups*

Tangles in a horse's mane supposed to be made by witches who have entwined them to make it easier to mount the horse. These tangles usually show up the morning after the witches have ridden the horses.

*witch grass*

Often called couch grass or dog grass, a pest hard to get rid of. It is found in the fields and waste places in the Valley, and a drink from it was once used for irritations of the bladder and kidney diseases.

*witch hazel*

Sometimes called the spotted alder. It is a sort of tree-like shrub and has the distinction of blooming in December like the wintersweet. The tea from witch hazel taken by the expectant mother was supposed to be an aid to childbirth. Many people in the Valley in the old days would keep a green hazel stick stuck up over the door of the house where a baby was expected. This was supposed to keep off witches and any evil influences. Forked witch hazel twigs were likewise used in the old days, and now and then you find a person who still uses them as diviners' or dowsing rods in locating good

places to dig wells for water or hunt for hidden treasure.

I remember the Negro well-digger and mason, Uncle Lawrence Askew, going about with his witch hazel twig, a forked twig. Holding it before him with both hands, he'd tramp around till he felt it turning in his hands, and then he would say, "Right here's the place to dig and you'll get a good well of water." I talked to Uncle Lawrence about it. "Do you mean it really turned in your hand, Uncle Lawrence?" "It sho' did. You might put all your man to it and try to hold it to keep it from turning, but it would turn just the same. It felt the power of the water down below pulling on it, yes sir." See also "dowsing rod."

*with a grain of salt*

Grudgingly, suspiciously.

*wither on the vine*

To become useless.

*within an inch of one's life*

A narrow escape from injury.

*without*

Unless. "I can't go without you go with me." "We'll have a big crowd on Easter Monday without there comes a big rain."

*withouten*

Without.

*with the bark off*

Frankly, to tell it straight, honestly.

*wizard*

A male witch. According to one folk belief, the way for a man to become a wizard is to put one hand on the top of his head and the other hand on the bottom of his foot, and, while in this position, swear by all good and evil that he will forsake all that is good and uphold the devil and all his evil works. And if he swears this loud and firm enough, he will have the power of a wizard. He will be a wizard.

Old Dilda Diggs said she saw a wizard once. She was walking along the road and looked off to one side and there he was standing. "He was a little bitty black rascal, Mr. Paul, and all around him looked like a wide snowfield, and I know'd he was a witchman." Old Aaron Diggs, her husband, said it didn't make any difference if it was a witch or a wizard. If you ever caught up with her or him, all you would find would be just a lump of jelly. He said that he had a sister who was a witch and weighed only ninety-nine pounds, but she had monstrous power. And when she would go out at night and try to bother people, he would warn everybody to take

a sieve or sifter and put it on the doorknob and she couldn't go through that door. A sifter was the only thing that would stop her. But his sister Rose, the one he said was a witch — according to the neighbors — used to go around telling that her brother, Aaron, was a wizard or witchman. They lived near Lumberton, but both are dead and long gone now.

as *wobbly* as a duck

*wolf*

A girl-chasing man.

A parasite grub that grows in the flesh of cattle.

Hell hath no fury like a *woman* scorned.

A *woman* much besot  
Is finally cheaply bought.

*woman's home companion*

The menses.

A *woman's tears* are a fountain of deceit.

*women folks*

Women.

*wont*

Wasn't, weren't. "He wont but five miles from home when his motor give out."

*won't do*

Not reliable, irresponsible. "The trouble with Neal is he just won't do."

Unacceptable. "That red tablecloth just won't do for this dinner."

How much *wood* would a woodchuck chuck,  
If a woodchuck could chuck wood?  
(A tongue twister.)

*wooden overcoat*

Coffin.

"*Woodman, Spare That Tree*"

A well-known poem.

A *woodpecker* pecked on the schoolhouse door.  
He pecked and he pecked till his pecker got sore.  
(A somewhat vulgar recitation drollery,  
very popular with us Pleasant Union schoolboys  
long ago.)

*woodpile*

A place on the farm near the house where firewood was usually kept to be cut and taken in. The woodpile is not a pile of wood, but a place.

*wood pussy*

The skunk.

*Woods colts* (bastards) are supposed to be especially smart.

*woodshed*

A spanking. "What that boy needs is the woodshed." It was the custom to take the child out to the woodshed for a severe spanking and "talking to" about his misbehaving.

He is not the best *woodsman* who makes the most chips.

*wood sorrel*

The oxalis, also called sour clover and sheep sorrel. It grows in the Valley damp places and is a diuretic. Old Mis' Zula Smith used to beat up the plant and mix it with butter or some sort of grease and use it to cure sores on people's lips.

*Wood Tag*

See "Tag."

*woof*

Complaining. Idle talk. "We just set around woofing."

To conjure.

*wool*

Difference, business, matter of concern. "Cuts no wool with me whatever you do."

*all wool and a yard wide*

First-rate, reliable, of fine character. "The new chancellor is all wool and a yard wide."

*woolgathering*

Idle dreaming, inattention. "I was woolgathering and didn't hear what you said, professor."

*wool hat*

An ultra-conservative, especially in politics and social reform. Also a dullard.

*pull the wool over one's eyes*

To deceive.



*woozy*

Sleepy, tired, also swimmy-headed.

*get the word*

To hear, to have news of.

A *word* in due season, how good it is!

A *word* to the wise is sufficient.

*one's word be his bond*

Trustworthy, reliable, honest. How often I have heard my father say of some respected neighbor, "He's straight as a shingle. His word is his bond."

*word in edgewise*

To be able to break in on a flood of talk. "Why don't you dry up a minute and let Sally get a word in edgewise."

*word of mouth*

Oral communication.

*word out*

News, information. "Get the word out I'm running for sheriff."

*words*

Angry argument. "We had some words, then he out with his pistol and shot me through the leg."

*wore out*

Tired, exhausted.

*work*

To ferment. Also to wriggle. "My scuppernong wine has already started working."

To get results, to influence, to have one's way, to manipulate. "With them curls and smiles and dimples, she knows how to work him."

Also medical. "That calomel really worked. I was on and off the mug all night long."

*Work* well begun is half done.

All *work* and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

He wouldn't *work* in a pie factory if you gave him the job of tasting.

*workaholic*

One whose devotion to working at his job is excessive.

*workday*

Every day except Sunday.

*work horse*

A badly put-upon person, usually an overworked husband.

*a-working*

Wiggling. "Them worms are just a-working in that can."

Man may *work* from sun to sun;

A woman's work is never done.

*work on*

To castrate. "I can't come over there Tuesday. I have to work on my hogs."

*works like a dog*

*works like a horse*

*works like a Trojan*

*works like the devil*

*work the streets*

To beg, solicit, to pimp.

*world*

A great deal, a bounteous supply. "He's got a world of timber on that river place."

Half the *world* does not know how the other half lives.

*have the world by the tail*

To be sitting pretty, to have all that one wishes.

*worm*

To dose a child or animal with medicine to get rid of worms.

*worm dust*

Very fine sawdust resulting from borers working in timber.

*worm fence*

See "rail fence."

*to worm out of*

To elicit from. "I didn't mean to let on about those folks, but Mazie wormed it out of me."

Also to extricate.

*wormseed mustard*

A medicinal plant.

*worm weed*

See "Jerusalem oak."

*wormwood*

Envy, bitter regret.

*wormy*

Low-down, vulgar.

*worn to a frazzle*

Tired out, exhausted.

*worration*

Annoyance.

*worry*

To bother, to tire.

*worrywart*

A person who continually looks on the sad side of things.

Buy him for what he's *worth* and sell him for what he thinks he's *worth* and you'll be rich.

*worth a cent*

A term of disparagement. "He couldn't spell worth a cent."

*not worth a hill of beans*

Hardly of any value, no account.

*not worth a straw*

Worthless.

*worth his weight in gold*

Very valuable.

*worth one's salt*

Reliable, steady.

*wound up*

To be overly excited, nervous, tense.

*wow*

To win great success, to triumph, to overpower, to give great delight. "In the old days Libby Holman could just wow an audience with her torch songs."

*wow!*

An exclamation of astonishment or of pleasure.

*wrack and ruin*

Demolishment, an undone condition. "That fine old Turner place has gone to wrack and ruin with niggers living in it."

*wranglesome*

Quarrelsome.

*wrap around one's finger*

To have undue influence over. "She can wrap him around her finger anytime she wants to."

*wrap up*

To finish, conclude, to end a meeting. "Well, we're ready to wrap up now — has anyone else anything to say?"

*wringing*

Saturated, dripping. "Go in there and put on a dry shirt. You're just wringing."

*wringing wet*

Very wet indeed.

*new wrinkle*

Method, device, a scheme, a gimmick. "When the Wright Brothers flew their first airplane, that brought a new wrinkle in the world."

as *wrinkled* as a dried prune

*wrinkle-horned*

Wise, old, full of experience.

The number of *wrinkles* in a fat baby's knee prophesies the number of children he or she will have.

Keep the *wrinkles* out of your face by keeping sunshine in your heart.

*nothing to write home about*

Nothing important, nothing to raise anyone's enthusiasm.

*to get up on the wrong side of the bed*

Ill-humored, irritable. "Whoo-ee, you musta got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning."

*wrapper*

Wrapper, usually referring to a woman's wrap-around robe over a nightgown.

*wroppings of the finger*

Poverty, destitution.

*wropt*

Wrapped.

*wunk*

Past tense of wink.

*wusp*

Wisp. "Mr. Page wouldn't feed his poor old mule more than a wusp of straw at the time."

# Y

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*yack-yack*

A medley of talking tongues, especially female.

*yak*

To chatter, to talk aimlessly. "There she sat with her dress cocked up yak-yakking about the state of the world."

*y'all*

You all.

*yaller*

Yellow.

*yaller janders (jandice)*

Yellow jaundice, the old folk name for hepatitis.

*yam*

A sweet potato.

*yammering*

Yelling, shouting, and complaining.

*yan*

Yon, yonder, beyond. "He went yan side the creek this morning, and I ain't seen him since."

*Yankee*

A Northern soldier or inhabitant of the North, especially in reference to the Civil War or to Dixie which is the South. As a child, I was raised like all other children in the Valley to hate the Yankees and to think of them as hardly human beings. We Green children had an old woman who took care of us a while whose name was Nancy Demming and she used to tell us the most fearsome tales about the Yankee soldiers. She said she

remembered when Sherman's bummers came through, waylaying people in the country and stealing everything that could be stolen, that she saw a Yankee squatted down behind the barn doing his business and "Chillun, his feet were forked and he had a tail that hung down like the devil." And we children oohed and ahed at the wonder of this.

Any member of the New York Yankees baseball team.

*Yankee bummers*

Sherman's bummers. See "ghost."

*"Yankee Doodle"*

The famous comedy song of the American Revolution.

*yap*

Pretty much the same as yak, loud, loose talk, jaw.

*yard*

The measurement from the thumb of an outstretched hand to the tip of one's nose. Mr. Thomas, the peddler who used to come around and sell my mother dress goods or ribbon, always measured his goods this way. He was a short, fat man and I am sure that his yard was much less than 36 inches.

*yard child*

A child born of miscegenation.

*yard eggs*

Chicken eggs laid on the ground and not in wire receivers as in professional poultry farms.

*yardman*

A gardener.

*yarn*

A falsehood, a wild story, an unbelievable account.

*yarrow*

Sometimes called old man's pepper or dog daisy. This plant grows in dry pasture places and the Indians used to make tea of it and take it for stomach trouble. The flowers and leaves make a good tea. This plant was supposed to be used by Achilles and his name is often given to it.

*yarth*

The earth.

*yaupon*

Known as Carolina tea, also as yaupon holly. This is a tree shrub that grows in the lower part of the Valley. The Indians made a sort of black drink from it, and some of the people in the Valley still make yaupon tea. Not so long

ago I attended a yaupon party given by Mrs. Winslow. Some yaupon drink had been made from the dry leaves and one cup of that stuff was enough to last me quite a while, but some of the guests drank it and praised it highly. They can have it.

*yawhoo*

A Cape Fear Valley spectre. There are a number of these imaginary creatures that have become part of the folklore — for example, Rawhead-and-bloody-bones, Jack-muh-lantern, the Headless Little Girl, the Iron-faced Man, the witch-woman, Aunt Mahaly, and others. John Charles McNeill, the beloved Valley poet, celebrates the yawhoo in his volume of poems, *Possums and Persimmons* (edited by Richard Walser).

“His hands were gigs, his toes were spears,  
He lashed a snaky tail,  
Hot blood gushed out of his eyes and ears  
And spattered along his trail  
And streaked his body with crimson tears  
Which else had been quite pale.”

*yea man!*

An emphatic yes.

*year*

Ear.

*yearling*

An adolescent boy. “He’s in the yearling stage now and, man, is he hard to handle!”

*yelk*

Yolk.

Any *yelling’s* good for selling.

*yellow*

Cowardly.

as *yellow* as a gourd

as *yellow* (cowardly) as a suck-egg hound

as *yellow* as gold

as *yellow* as saffron

*yellow bellies*

Perch. Also the Japanese soldiers in World War II were given this “lovely” name by us, the enemy.



*yellowhammer*

The flicker.

*yellow jessamine*

A prolific vine, loaded with yellow flowers. It is becoming popular as a vine to decorate porches or fences.

*yellowroot*

This plant grows mainly in the upper Piedmont and in the mountains. Tea is made from it and is supposed to be good for the sore throat or thrash and also for nerves.

*yellow yarrow*

A cure for toothache.

*yen*

A yearning, a desire. "I don't know what to do with my daughter, she has a yen for them beatnik fellows."

*yep*

Yes.

*yes-siree-bob*

An emphatic affirmation. "If they keep on a-monkeying there in Asia, a third world war will break out, yes-siree-bob."

*yestydeevening*

Yesterday evening, meaning yesterday afternoon. A common eastern North Carolina pronunciation.

*yew tree*

A popular cultivated tree. It is especially common around cemeteries.

*"Yield Not to Temptation"*

A popular church hymn.

*yistiddy*

Yesterday.

*yit*

Yet.

*Brother Yokum*

One of the many fakers and hocus-pocus religious hypocrites who have, like the patent medicine vendors, milked the people in the Valley year after year out of much of their hard-earned money. This Brother Yokum used to advertise his sanctified and healing handkerchiefs in the Valley, and many a person would send a mail order out to California to get these handkerchiefs

to put on afflicted places — boils, cancers, sprains, sore muscles and the like. Then when it was felt that the power had gone out of the handkerchief, it would be returned to Brother Yokum with twenty-five cents accompanying each one, and he would endow the handkerchief with the usual power and return it.

*in yonder*

In another room, at another place. “Where’s the carving knife?” “In yonder” (meaning, say, in the dining room).

*you bet*

A term of endorsement or agreement.

*You missed me*, you missed me,  
Now you’ve got to kiss me.  
(A teasing rhyme.)

*young*

Scant, scarce, in small supply. “How is the gas in that tractor?” “It’s beginning to get a little bit young.”

*young fry*

Children.

*you’re in*

You’ve won, you’ve reached success.

*by yourself (myself)*

Alone, singly. “Are you going up there in the night all by yourself?”

*youruneses*

Yours.

*Youth* is life’s seed time.

If *youth* only would — if old age only could.

*yowl*

Cry. “That baby yowled all night and I couldn’t sleep a bit.” Also to howl or yell.

*yo-yo*

A cord winding skill toy.

*yow-yow*

A chasing bark of dogs.

*yucca*

The Spanish needle or Spanish bayonet, bear grass. Also called Adam’s needle and thread. It is said the Indian doctors used a salve made from it

for inflammation.

*yudder*

The other.

*yum-yum*

An expression of joyous tasting.

# Z

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## *zany*

A simpleton.

## *zip*

Pep, spirit, fire. "He's still got zip, old as he is."

## *Zion (or Sion)*

A hill in Jerusalem, the site of the royal palace of David (about 1000 B.C.) and his successors. It became known as the place of the temple, the center of Hebrew worship, government and national life. Also in Hebrew folklore and religious belief it stands for the heavenly city of God. It has the same heavenly significance for those of the Christian faith, and many a Protestant church hymn sings its praises.

"Zion stands with hills surrounded,  
Zion kept my power divine,  
All her foes shall be confounded,  
Tho' the world in arms combine.  
Happy Zion, what a favor'd lot is thine!"

## *Zionism*

The movement among the Jews for the establishment of a home and a movement kept alive generation after generation because of anti-Semitism mainly and as part of the Hebrew religious prophecy. Finally, in 1948 the state of Israel was formed after the United Nations had decided on the partition of Palestine to make way for it. The result has not been an entirely happy one. The uprooted Palestinians are still seeking a return of their homeland taken over by the Jews. Quarrels and killings and border wars are of common occurrence. And the United States along with the United Nations is kept busy trying to work out a solution that will bring peace to the region. But both Israel and the Palestinians continue their implacable

antagonisms and show no signs of lessening the spilling of blood.

***zodiac***

An imaginary belt across the sky along which the moon and principal planets pass. Early astronomers and astrologers divided this path into twelve parts of thirty degrees in length called "signs." Each of these signs contained a constellation of stars, and each sign received its name from the name of the constellation in it. All of the signs except Libra were named after living things and the belt was called the zodiac after the Greek word zodiakos, meaning an animal.

These early thinkers believed there was a close relationship between the heavenly bodies and man and so it was that the twelve signs soon became associated with the human body. Charts dating back as early as 1300 B.C. showed the astrologers' belief in the relationship. With this guide they constructed everything from fortune-telling to guides for planting and good fishing. For instance, take the sign Scorpio which is associated with the loins and known as the water sign. While that sign is in the sky for two or three days, farmers find it profitable to plant crops that are above the ground. All the almanacs carry full information and guidance as to the zodiac.

***by zooks!***

A mild interjection.

***zoon bug***

The June bug, katydid.

***Zounds!***

A mild oath.

***zowie***

Suddenly.

***zull***

Sull, sulk.

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## Author's Note

For many years I have traveled up and down the Cape Fear Valley, North Carolina, where I was born and where I have lived much of my life, collecting the folklore of my people—noting down their speech, beliefs, customs, anecdotes, ballads, epitaphs, legends, proverbs, stories, superstitions, herb cures, games and the like, as well as gathering biographies of many a gnarled and crusted character, real and imaginary. The main body of this rich harvest of human living and dying I have gathered into this volume. Some of the material, shaped into stories or plays, has appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The English Journal*, *Esquire*, *Harper's Magazine*, *North Carolina Folklore*, *Southwest Review*, *Theatre Arts*, *Yale Review* and in volumes of "fiction" and plays of mine published by Harper Brothers, Samuel French, Inc., Robert M. McBride and Company and The University of North Carolina Press. Permission to use the material in its raw and more native rendering is gratefully acknowledged.

Paul Green



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## Other Creative Works by Paul Green

### FULL-LENGTH PLAYS WITH BROADWAY PRODUCTIONS

*IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM*—Pulitzer Prize, 1927.

*THE FIELD GOD*

*JOHNNY JOHNSON*, with music by Kurt Weill.

*ROLL SWEET CHARIOT*

*THE HOUSE OF CONNELLY*

*NATIVE SON*, dramatization with Richard Wright, author of the novel.

### SYMPHONIC DRAMAS

Paul Green originated this genre of drama, reputed to be one of two American contributions to world drama. "Symphonic drama" was the term he applied to plays which utilized all elements of theatre "sounding together"—dialogue, poetry, music, pantomime, lighting, sound effects, dance, etc.—in the dramatization of historical events, usually for staging in the area where the events occurred. [Dates given represent production seasons. An asterisk indicates the play has been published.]

\**THE LOST COLONY*, annually since 1937, Roanoke Island, North Carolina.

\**THE HIGHLAND CALL*, 1939, 1940, Fayetteville, North Carolina; 1955, 1956, Campbell College, Buie's Creek, North Carolina; 1976, Cumberland County, North Carolina.

\**THE COMMON GLORY*, 1947-63; 1965-73; 1975-76, Williamsburg, Virginia.

*FAITH OF OUR FATHERS*, 1950, 1951, Washington, D.C.

*THE 17th STAR*, 1953, Columbus, Ohio.

\**WILDERNESS ROAD*, 1955-57; 1972-80, Berea, Kentucky.

\**THE FOUNDERS*, 1957, 1958 and 1964, Williamsburg, Virginia.

\**THE CONFEDERACY*, 1958, 1959, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

\**THE STEPHEN FOSTER STORY*, annually since 1959, Bardstown, Kentucky.

\**CROSS AND SWORD*, annually since 1965, St. Augustine, Florida.

\**TEXAS*, annually since 1966, Palo Duro Canyon, Texas.

\**TRUMPET IN THE LAND*, annually since 1970, New Philadelphia, Ohio.

\**DRUMBEATS IN GEORGIA*, 1973, 1974, Jekyll Island, Georgia.

\**LOUISIANA CAVALIER*, 1976-1980, Natchitoches, Louisiana.

\**WE THE PEOPLE*, 1976 Bicentennial drama, Columbia, Maryland.

\**THE LONE STAR*, annually since 1977, Galveston, Texas.

## PUBLISHED PLAYS (in addition to symphonic dramas)

- THE LAST OF THE LOWRIES*, 1922.  
*THE NO 'COUNT BOY*, one-act, 1924.  
*THE LORD'S WILL AND OTHER CAROLINA PLAYS*, 1925.  
*LONESOME ROAD*, Six Plays for the Negro Theatre, 1926.  
*THE FIELD GOD* and *IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM*, 1927.  
*IN THE VALLEY AND OTHER CAROLINA PLAYS*, 1928.  
*THE HOUSE OF CONNELLY AND OTHER PLAYS*, 1931.  
*ROLL SWEET CHARIOT*, 1935.  
*SHROUD MY BODY DOWN*, 1935.  
*HYMN TO THE RISING SUN*, 1936.  
*JOHNNY JOHNSON*, 1937, 1970.  
*THE ENCHANTED MAZE*, 1939.  
*OUT OF THE SOUTH*, fifteen plays, 1939.  
*NATIVE SON*, with Richard Wright, author of the novel, 1941.  
*PEER GYNT* (American version), 1951.  
*WINGS FOR TO FLY*, Three Plays of Negro Life (for radio), 1959.  
*FIVE PLAYS OF THE SOUTH*, 1963.  
*THE SHELTERING PLAID*, one-act, 1965.  
*THE HONEYCOMB*, 1972.

Also numerous one-act plays published individually by Samuel French, Inc.

## NOVELS

- THE LAUGHING PIONEER*, 1932.  
*THIS BODY THE EARTH*, 1935.

## SHORT STORIES, volumes of

- WIDE FIELDS*, 1938.  
*SALVATION ON A STRING*, 1946.  
*DOG ON THE SUN*, 1949.  
*WORDS AND WAYS*, 1968.  
*HOME TO MY VALLEY*, 1970.  
*LAND OF NOD AND OTHER STORIES*, 1976.

## ESSAYS

- THE HAWTHORN TREE*, 1943.  
*FOREVER GROWING*, 1945.  
*DRAMATIC HERITAGE*, 1953.  
*DRAMA AND THE WEATHER*, 1958.  
*PLOUGH AND FURROW*, 1963.

POETRY, LYRICS AND MUSIC

- TRIFLES OF THOUGHT*, privately published as a soldier, 1917.  
*THE LOST COLONY SONGBOOK*, compiler/lyricist, 1938.  
*THE HIGHLAND CALL SONGBOOK*, compiler/lyricist, 1941.  
*SONG IN THE WILDERNESS*, (Cantata with music by Charles Vardell), lyrics, 1947.  
*THE COMMON GLORY SONGBOOK*, compiler/lyricist, 1941.  
*TEXAS SONGBOOK*, compiler/lyricist (includes Paul Green melodies).  
*CARMEN* (American version), lyrics, 1953.  
*JOHNNY JOHNSON* (music by Kurt Weill), lyrics, 1936.  
*WHAT IS THE SOUL OF MAN?* (single piece), lyrics and music.

SCREENPLAYS including:

- CABIN IN THE COTTON* (based on the novel of the same title by H.H. Kroll), Warner Brothers, 1932, starring Richard Barthelmess and Bette Davis.  
*STATE FAIR* (based on novel of the same title by Phil Strong), Fox Film Corp., 1932, starring Will Rogers and Janet Gaynor.  
*DR. BULL* (based on novel *The Last Adam*, by James Gould Cozzens), Fox Film Corp., 1933, starring Will Rogers.  
*VOLTAIRE*, Warner Brothers, 1933, starring George Arliss.  
*DAVID HARUM* (based on the novel by E.N. Westcott), Twentieth Century Fox, starring Will Rogers, 1934.

RADIO PLAYS

- A START IN LIFE*, published in *The Free Company Presents*, ed. James Boyd, 1941.  
*WINGS FOR TO FLY*, *Three Plays of Negro Life*, Samuel French, Inc., 1959.

FOREIGN PRODUCTIONS

- THE FIELD GOD*, Gate Theatre, London, 1927-28.  
*WHITE DRESSES*, Japan, 1951.  
*JOHNNY JOHNSON*, Bochum, Germany, 1973-74.  
*JOHNNY JOHNSON*, Finnish National Theatre, Helsinki, Finland, 1975-79.  
*THE STEPHEN FOSTER STORY*, Japan, 1985.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

PAUL GREEN was born in Lillington, North Carolina, on March 17, 1894. In 1921 he received his B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the following year married Elizabeth Atkinson Lay. Green's most famous work, for which he received the 1927 Pulitzer Prize, was a drama titled *In Abraham's Bosom*. Another notable work of Green's was the production of a symphonic drama titled *The Lost Colony*, which has run for more than fifty years. Paul Green passed away in Chapel Hill on May 4, 1981.